
Making the 'Visible' Visible:
An Interactional Understanding of
Police Visibility in Community
Engagement

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Abstract

Patrol gained renewed importance in UK policing reforms in the early 2000s. The introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and their subsequent integration into the national rollout of Neighbourhood Policing marked a significant shift in policing policy and practice. Dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) made up of police officers, special constables and PCSOs were tasked with providing a visible, accessible and familiar policing function in every neighbourhood across the country. The underlying ideology of focusing resources on the public knowing and being able to contact local police officers and staff and having the opportunity to contribute to local policing priorities and decision-making emphasised the importance of community engagement in policing at the same time as developing the contribution of patrol to this area of work. However, over time and against a backdrop of ever-increasing demand, reduced resources and the changing nature of crime, the day-to-day activities of NPTs have altered to the extent that the function of Neighbourhood Policing generally and the role of PCSOs more specifically have become pertinent concerns. In response, the College of Policing has formulated Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines which, in regard to patrol, identify police officers and staff having a targeted visible presence in neighbourhoods as an essential element of community engagement.

In light of the shifting landscape of Neighbourhood Policing, this thesis seeks to understand the visible presence of police officers and staff on foot and vehicle patrol to explore the way in which they can contribute to community engagement as structured in the Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines. The thesis applies concepts from the work of Erving Goffman to ethnographic fieldwork conducted in two NPTs in one urban UK constabulary to analyse the interactional properties of police patrol in vehicles and on foot. Using Goffman's theoretical lens, the communicative acts of police officers and staff conducting patrol are explored to identify the potential opportunities for and restrictions on police contact with the public and show how the interactional devices of PCSOs on foot can create a type of visibility that facilitates two-way dialogue with the public and a better understanding of communities. Bringing together the identified communicative mechanisms that can occur on patrol to facilitate or counteract community engagement, an interactional understanding of police visibility is presented to develop practice understandings. Overall, the thesis provides practical insights that illustrate the continued relevance of foot patrol and the ongoing utility of PCSOs in Neighbourhood Policing while developing broader considerations of perception and symbolism in the policing literature and the use of ethnography to study patrol practice in policing research.

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List of Abbreviations

APCC	Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
EBP	Evidence-Based Policing
HASC	Home Affairs Select Committee
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing Team
PC	Police Constable
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
SCP	Signal Crimes Perspective
Sgt	Sergeant

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Introduction

Introducing Police Visibility

Police visibility, traditionally represented by ‘bobbies on the beat’, has always been prominent in public expectations of policing (Crawford et al. 2005; Bradley, 1998; Fitzgerald, Hough and Joseph, 2002). The public value attached to uniformed foot patrol is in part related to how it symbolises ‘the presence of protection, and the capacity, albeit limited, to manage risks and threats to security’ (Innes, 2005, p.160). The ‘reassurance function’ a visible police presence can provide, that is the feelings of safety and security citizens can experience when they see and are aware of a police officer or police vehicle close by, is substantiated in evaluations of foot patrol (Bahn, 1974). An increased visible police presence has been shown to reduce citizen’s fear of crime and increase their feelings of personal safety (Police Foundation, 1981; Trojanowicz, 1982). At the same time, enhancing citizen reassurance is not simply a matter of increasing police patrols, equally important is what police officers do when they are on patrol (Innes and Fielding, 2002; Skogan and Harnett, 1997). This draws attention to the need for the police to consider their ‘symbolic communication [and] impression management’ in their patrol practice (Innes and Fielding, 2002, Para. 8.4); it is less about quantity of patrols and more about the quality of the police-public interaction (Innes, 2004a, p.161). This refocusing of the semiotic properties of police visibility to consider the relationship between the police and the public has become notable in public views of policing.

In recent times, public desire for an increased police presence is motivated by the opportunity it creates for the police to ‘re-engage’ with people and better understand local security and low-level crime and disorder problems that matter to communities (Fitzgerald, Hough and Joseph, 2002, p.132). The alignment of police visibility with community engagement, particularly in terms of increasing police responsiveness to local needs, reinforces the broader symbolism and cultural significance invoked by policing. Scholars emphasise how for some sections of the population the figure of the ‘bobby on the beat’ produces and communicates meaning indicative of cohesive order, legal authority and communal morality to the

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extent that it is interpreted as a measure of the state of policing and wider society (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). In this way, patrolling police officers come to represent 'symbolic 'guardians' of social stability and order held responsible for community values and informal social controls' with any perceived absence of their presence signalling a loss of discipline, societal decline and a failure of the policing institution to connect with communities (Jackson and Bradford, 2009, p.2; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003).

The meanings, beliefs and sentiments underpinning police visibility accord it a symbolic capital that has been mobilised by political actors to gain popular support for increasing and developing police resources (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). In the last twenty years this can be seen through the implementation of Community Policing programmes, specifically the Reassurance Policing and Neighbourhood Policing Programmes in the UK. These Programmes, complemented by the creation and integration of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) role, have placed a 'reinvigorated emphasis' on uniformed foot patrol as a mechanism for delivering a visible, accessible and familiar style of policing where the public know and are able to contact their local police and have the opportunity to contribute to policing (Innes, 2004a, p.168). This type of police visibility, characterised by the patrol presence of police officers and staff, the construction and communication of its semiotic and symbolic qualities in the public space and its contribution to community engagement is the focus of this thesis. To understand the rationale for embarking on studying this specific area of policing, the chapter will set out the research and policing context that provided the initial impetus for conducting the PhD before outlining the research plan and structure of the thesis.

Research Context

Community engagement, namely the responsibility of the police to reflect the 'needs and expectations of [...] local communities in decision making, service delivery and practice', has become embedded in policing policy (Home Office, 2006, p.3). It forms

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part of an approach to increase the visibility, accountability and responsiveness of police forces in communities through Neighbourhood Policing (Barnes and Eagle, 2007). Identifying that there is little academic coverage of the way in which community engagement is constructed at the local level in policing, particularly in a climate of austerity, my Masters research involved qualitative interviews with police officers, police staff and a volunteer in one UK police force to develop incomplete insights into the practice context. The study's findings illustrated that community engagement can consist of a complex interplay of police inputs and community inputs contributing to different types of police contact with the public (Weston, 2016). It showed that these contacts between the police and public fulfil a range of policing outcomes that do not easily translate into broader measures for understanding the nature, reach and impact of community engagement work (Weston, 2016). Within this broad understanding of community engagement practice, police visibility characterised through police officers and staff enacting a physical and online presence in communities appeared to be an integral mechanism through which the police experienced and were experienced by the public. As one PCSO expressed, '[community engagement] for me, [is] just being out and about, visible to the public [...] we'll go round and we'll say hello to people and they're seeing us' (Weston, 2016, p.101 -102). This idea of 'being out and about' in the public space, and as another officer described it, 'saying hello, [...] stopping to speak to people; staff aren't just walking out, hands in pockets head down going somewhere' (Weston, 2016, p.76), was voiced on a number of occasions during the research. Participants tended to explain their presence in terms of making people in communities feel safer and protected by the police, but they seemed to struggle to expand upon what it was specifically about what they were doing that fulfilled a community engagement function. Consequently, at the end of the research, I sensed that I had not fully grasped the essence of what community engagement is in the day-to-day work of police officers and staff.

Turning to the literature to explore the ideas described by participants, it was clear that the police officers and staff I spoke to were attuned to the symbolic value the public attach to a police presence, particularly in terms of its 'reassurance factor'.

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This concept, suggested by Bahn (1974), highlights how the public appeal of an everyday conspicuous police patrol relates to a police presence, regardless of its effectiveness in addressing crime, symbolising concern and security. While the reassurance offered by a visible 'beat cop' appears as a 'nostalgic dream of a tranquil past that never was', it remains a desirable symbol in public understandings of policing (Bahn, 1974, p.342). Providing an explanation for the ongoing public attachment to a police presence, the Signal Crimes Perspective (SCP) provides a theoretical framework that builds on the semiotic and symbolic qualities of visible policing and informs the methodology for Reassurance Policing (Innes, 2005; 2007). The SCP shows that the communicative properties of certain crimes and disorders ('signal crimes') disproportionately influence how people, individually and collectively, come to understand, sense and act in relation to their security (Innes, 2007). This is because some crimes and some disorders are markedly 'visible' to people and are perceived as 'warning signals' about the 'risky people, places and events that they either do, or might, encounter in their lives' (Innes, 2004b, p.336). Accordingly, policing interventions, like patrol, that convey 'the presence of a protective form of action', known as 'control signals', can be purposely devised to target the signal crimes identified as influencing a community's sense of security to alleviate or counteract their negative perceptual impact (Innes, 2005, p.163; 2014). In this way, the SCP emphasises the communicative significance of police visibility, specifically uniformed foot patrol. It formed, as the next section will outline, part of understanding the importance of the PCSO role, was identified as a key policing mechanism in the programme of Reassurance Policing and remained a prominent function in Neighbourhood Policing (Barker, 2014).

The SCP, however, focuses on how the public come to make sense of crime and disorder and how such understandings are embodied in the 'wider symbolic construction of social space' (Innes, 2004b, p.336 and 352). By solely concentrating on police visibility in the public's interpretation of safety and security, the SCP does not elaborate on how a police presence should be applied and maximised in the practice context to best achieve a control signal that acts as 'a protective form of action' (Innes, 2005, p.163). The absence of direction on police visibility is highlighted

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in the SCP methodology where the researchers point out that the task of developing what the police are actually seen to be doing during visible patrol is the responsibility of the police themselves (Innes and Fielding, 2002). The lack of consideration for the nature of police symbolic communications on patrol to convey safety and security makes the perspective equally limiting for thinking about how the semiotic features of police visibility can contribute, in the way the participants in my Masters research described, to community engagement. This revealed a gap in understanding how a police presence can deliver a community engagement function and it appeared a more pertinent concern when considering police visibility in the current policing landscape.

Policing Context

Community Policing programmes inherently encapsulate a range of different philosophical perspectives and organisational strategies, but one of the main approaches adopted is police officers being assigned to localities on a long-term basis with regular patrol responsibilities to deliver inter alia community engagement (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994, p.3; Fielding, 2005). It is seen as creating a 'style of policing where the police are close to the public, know their concerns from regular contacts, and act on them in accord with the community's wishes' (Fielding, 2005, p.460). In the UK, this style of Community Policing has taken shape in the Reassurance Policing and Neighbourhood Policing programmes and has been complemented by the PCSO role; all of which have been designed around strengthening the utility of police visibility in public policing. PCSOs, non-warranted members of police staff introduced under the Police Reform Act 2002, were created as an additional policing resource for delivering highly visible uniformed patrol and engaging with communities to improve feelings of safety and security, reduce anti-social behaviour and increase public confidence (ACPO, 2007). They were introduced at a time when the police organisation feared losing its patrol function to private sector providers who were increasingly monopolising this area of policing (Innes, 2005). Supporting the maintenance of uniformed patrol in public policing, Reassurance Policing offered a

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‘philosophy and set of values’ to explain the importance of police visibility in delivering public reassurance (Innes, 2005). The Reassurance Policing Programme, piloted between 2003 and 2005, centred on a strategy of visible police officers being accessible to and familiar with local people, targeting the problems identified as significant to them and co-producing solutions with them and partner organisations (Innes, 2004a). The translation of Reassurance Policing into Neighbourhood Policing retained the emphasis on police visibility but positioned it as part of a wider approach to the delivery of local policing (Innes, 2006).

The Neighbourhood Policing Programme incorporated the three delivery mechanisms formulated in the Reassurance Policing Programme – police visibility, community involvement in identifying local priorities and collaborative problem-solving with partners and the public – with the aims to improve the detection and prevention of crime, encourage civility and foster more cohesive communities (Home Office, 2005; Quinton and Morris, 2008). Dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) made up of police officers, special constables and PCSOs in every neighbourhood across the country were tasked with ‘providing a visible, reassuring presence’ (Home Office, 2004b, p.7). In particular, the integration of the PCSO role into Neighbourhood Policing established the auxiliaries as ‘key deliverers of visible and community-focused policing tasks’ (Greig-Midlane, 2014, p.7). However, over time police visibility, and more specifically the PCSO role, has become increasingly threatened by changes in the policing landscape.

The ever-increasing demand on service, diminished resources brought about by austerity in 2010 and the changing nature of crime has placed increasing pressure on police forces to adapt on a radical scale (Brown 2014). A ‘worrying consequence’ highlighted by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), in its 2016 *Police Effectiveness Report*, has been the inadequate investment in local policing whereby many forces have overlooked and failed to revise their community-based policing models to reflect changes in their budgets, service provision and communities (HMIC, 2016). Within this austere climate of change police visibility has noticeably reduced,

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partly evidenced through the substantial decrease in the number of PCSOs¹ (Hymas, 2019). This has both raised questions about the necessity and cost effectiveness of the PCSO role² and led to specific concerns about the end of ‘bobbies on the beat’ (Dearden, 2019; Loveday and Smith, 2015). While police visibility has been susceptible to the financial cuts in policing, its symbolic capital appears to have endured with recent changes in policy placing a renewed emphasis on its importance in the delivery of local policing.

Acknowledging that the day-to-day activities of Neighbourhood Policing have dramatically altered and addressing the concerns raised by the Inspectorate, the College of Policing (2018a) recently developed *Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines* to provide forces with a practicable framework for delivering local policing. Police visibility, as figure 1 below illustrates, features as an ‘essential element’ of the ‘engaging communities’ guideline. It has since been indirectly boosted by the government announcing a commitment to increasing police funding to put ‘more bobbies on the beat’ (GOV.UK, 2019). These developments, although in their infancy, recast police visibility as an important part of local policing functions, particularly delivering community engagement. Against this backdrop, it seemed increasingly relevant to develop understandings into how police visibility, and more specifically the visible presence of PCSOs, can contribute to providing an ongoing two-way dialogue between the police and the public and enabling the police to better understand communities, as envisaged in the ‘engaging communities’ guideline.

¹ The total number of PCSOs in England and Wales has reduced from 16,918, at its peak in 2010, to 10,213 officers, as of March 2017 (Statista, 2017).

² The most recent illustration is the Chief Constable of Norfolk Police revealing the decision to make 150 PCSOs redundant to instead fund more fully warranted police officers based on the view that they are better equipped to meet new policing demands produced by the growing complexity of crime and the need to protect the most vulnerable (cited in BBC News, 2017 and Guardian, 2017).

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Delivering neighbourhood policing

1. Engaging communities

Chief officers should work with police and crime commissioners to deliver and support neighbourhood policing and must ensure it is built on effective engagement and consultation with communities.

Essential elements include:

- Officers, staff and volunteers being responsible for and having a targeted visible presence in neighbourhoods
- A clearly defined and transparent purpose for engagement activities
- Regular formal and informal contact with communities
- Working with partners (eg, by identifying communities and sharing arrangements for engagement)
- Making available information about local crime and policing issues to communities
- Engagement that is tailored to the needs and preferences of different communities
- Using engagement to identify local priorities and inform problem-solving
- Officers, staff and volunteers providing feedback and being accountable to communities
- Officers, staff and volunteers supporting communities, where appropriate, to be more active in the policing of their local areas.

Community engagement in neighbourhoods should:

- Provide an ongoing two-way dialogue between the police and the public
- Enable the police to develop a better understanding of communities and their needs, risks and threats.

This guideline is underpinned by **section 34 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011** which provides a legal requirement for chief officers to make arrangements to consult with the public in each neighbourhood, provide local information about crime and policing and hold regular public meetings.

Figure 1 - The 'Engaging Communities' Guideline (College of Policing, 2018a, p.5)

Thesis Outline

The preceding sections have set out the contextual factors underpinning the primary research motivation for exploring police visibility as an aspect of community engagement work in more depth. The remainder of the thesis will present the research project through the following chapter structure:

Chapter One provides a brief overview of the policy context of police visibility as an aspect of community engagement. It shows how this area of policing policy is consistently constructed as part of a service responsive to the community which implies that citizens will engage with police officers and staff on patrol; that a police presence will provide an engagement function; and that communities will be identifiable units discernible to police officers and staff on patrol.

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Chapter Two challenges the identified policy assumptions separately using the academic literature. In the first section, research into citizen participation in Community Policing and citizen perception of patrol is presented to show the confluence of factors that contribute to citizen engagement making it unlikely that members of the public will straightforwardly engage with police officers and staff on patrol. Following this in the second section, studies highlighting the cultural and organisational issues impacting upon the delivery of community engagement are explored to argue that police officers and staff are not instinctively inclined, supported or equipped to deliver an engagement function on patrol. In the third section, academic commentary around the presentation of community in policing policy and the theories that underpin it are examined to contend that contemporary communities are not simple organisational units detectable to and compatible with patrolling police officers and staff. Through all three critiques of the policy assumptions, the lack of scholarly understanding of the dynamics of citizen engagement with the police on patrol and the ways in which police officers and staff negotiate the patrol practice context to engage with contemporary communities, especially from a qualitative research perspective, is emphasised. In the final section, this gap in the literature is summarised and used to formulate two research questions that aim to qualitatively explore police visibility in community engagement in more depth:

- What is a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs?
- In what ways does police visibility, particularly PCSO visibility, contribute to community engagement?

Chapter Three sets out the research methodology. It details how an ethnographic approach involving fieldwork in two NPTs in one urban constabulary in the North of England, renamed Wildebay Police, was devised and experienced to answer the research questions. The first part sets out what underpinned the rationale for selecting ethnography as the research method. It outlines how it provided a method for developing the evidence-base of police patrol work by offering a way of seeing policing from the inside; how it was theoretically positioned to capture insights about

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the social action of police officers and staff on patrol; and how it was a choice influenced by my personal background. The subsequent sections detail the research procedure including the ethical considerations and personal reflections that formed the process of accessing and negotiating the fieldwork setting to collect and record descriptive accounts of police officers and staff on patrol. The final sections cover the analytical process, including the use of concepts from Goffman's work on face-to-face interaction in the coding of fieldnotes, and the reasoning for choosing a Goffmanian perspective to develop insights about police patrol.

Chapters Four, Five and Six illustrate through the application of Goffman's concepts on face-to-face interaction the communicative acts of police officers and staff conducting patrol, including the potential opportunities for and restrictions on police contact with the public, and how such interactional possibilities and shortcomings can facilitate or hinder community engagement. *Chapter Four* analyses the interactional space of the police vehicle to show how it creates potential communicative barriers that can have implications for delivering community engagement before contrasting it with an examination of the interactional space of the street and the communicative gains brought about by PCSOs on foot. It reveals that PCSOs on foot occupy a visible presence that can create the basis for developing a type of community engagement that vehicle patrol is unlikely to achieve. Building on the interactional features of foot patrol and how they can function to support community engagement, *Chapter Five* analyses in more detail the nature of the face-to-face interaction PCSOs can experience with the public and the different functions it serves to show how it can develop the two-way dialogue and better understanding of communities proposed in the College of Policing (2018a) 'engaging communities' guideline. *Chapter Six* examines the communicative challenges and barriers that can hinder the interactional influence of PCSOs on foot patrol, including improper public conduct, situational factors, PCSOs' individual dispositions and organisational directions and changes.

Chapter Seven summarises in the first section the Goffmanian analysis of the findings to answer the research questions. It explains how a visible police presence in the

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routine work of NPTs is created by the interactional accessibility of police officers and staff on patrol before setting out how the interactional space of foot patrol, in comparison to vehicle patrol, can create the communicative conditions for establishing a visible presence to engage communities. The interactional devices available to PCSOs on foot are described to show how they can lead to indirect and direct forms of contact, produce face engagements and develop acquaintanceships with all those around them. It is proposed that these interactions on foot patrol are capable of cultivating community engagement by promoting a sense of belonging, trust, reassurance and familiarity at the same time as facilitating ongoing two-way dialogue, enabling information-sharing about communities' needs, risks and threats and involving people in local policing. Bringing together these insights around the different interactional spaces of vehicle and foot patrol and the distinctive types of contact and messages that can be created from them, an interactional understanding of police visibility is constructed. In the final section, this perspective is explored alongside the literature to consider how it complements and expands on existing knowledge about community engagement in policing.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis with a summary of the PhD study. It brings together the research insights to show how the thesis has contributed to practice understandings of police visibility as a mechanism of community engagement, especially in relation to the role of PCSOs, in addition to developing theoretical reflections around perception and symbolism in policing and supporting the use of ethnography to study police patrol work. The chapter ends by making suggestions for future research to build on the use of an interactional understanding of police visibility in the day-to-day community engagement practice of NPTs.

Defining Police Visibility and Community Engagement

Given the many different uses and descriptions of policing terms, those that are central to this PhD research are listed below with a brief explanation of how they are specifically referenced in the subsequent chapters.

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- *Police visibility* refers to police officers and staff having a physical presence in public and private spaces in the course of conducting foot and vehicle patrol. The term is therefore used interchangeably with *patrol* and *presence*.
- *Patrol* denotes police officers and staff travelling around geographical locations in vehicles or on foot in a traditional surveillance capacity and includes all the tasks and initiatives they incorporate into this activity to reflect, as Wakefield (2006) identifies, the all-encompassing nature of this type of work. In terms of the fieldwork, the geographical locations either formed part of the dedicated 'beat' areas of the participants or were identified by the NPTs as places requiring increased police attention due to specific concerns, such as a rise in anti-social behaviour issues. The tasks and initiatives often varied between police officers and police staff related to the different remits of their roles, the resources available and/or the specific day or time of the shift. They are specified in more detail in the findings and analysis chapters where relevant to understanding the participants' patrol practices. It is of note that the participants in the field excerpts detailed in these chapters sometimes use the term High Visibility Patrol to describe their work. However, due to their use of this term not reflecting anything different from the definition of patrol already described, it was decided not to adopt it in the rest of the thesis to avoid potential confusion. High Visibility Patrol can be interpreted as a geographical saturation of marked police personnel and vehicles, which was not observed in this fieldwork (see NCJRS, 1974, p.1).
- *Community* is a difficult concept to define, particularly when making sense of it in the context of Community Policing. This is recognised and explored in more detail in Chapter 2. When using the term and not referencing a specific research position, in accordance with Myhill (2012, p.15), *community* will be understood as a 'multi-faceted, fluid concept.' It can relate, but is not limited, to residence in a geographic location; identification with certain demographic characteristics; alignment with specific attitudes, values or beliefs; and/or

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affiliation with particular interests, activities or occupations. An individual can be a part of multiple communities at any one time, and may move in, out or between one or more communities over time (Myhill, 2012, p.15).

- *Community Engagement* is characterised according to the objectives of the College of Policing (2018a) 'engaging communities' guideline (see Figure 1) and refers to police officers and staff providing an ongoing two-way dialogue between the police and the public and developing a better understanding of communities, their needs, risks and threats. The decision to use the guideline as a benchmark for describing community engagement practice in this research was two-fold. Firstly, the guideline is the current reference point for police forces to structure their community engagement practice and it will inform future police inspections. Secondly, the guideline was assessed as realistically reflecting the most achievable level of community engagement police forces can and do expect to deliver. This was based on findings from a review by Simmonds (2015) which highlighted that, in comparison to the broad notion of community engagement involving the transfer of power and decision-making to communities, police forces' community engagement strategies tend to be passive in nature, limited to types of consultation or information gathering and presented in terms of understanding local issues or meeting the needs of service users. It is also of note that *engagement* is used interchangeably with *participation*, *partnership* and *involvement*, and these terms are sometimes used with the word *citizen* instead of *community*, specifically when presenting a review of research. It is recognised that all these expressions can mean different things to different people. The decision to include this vocabulary was based on *community engagement* being a relatively recent concept in policy and all of these identified terms being associated with it and/or used to describe police-public interaction in the wider literature (Myhill, 2012).

Policy Context

Chapter 1

Contextualising Police Visibility in Policy

Police visibility as an aspect of community engagement in policing policy is structured around a number of implicit assumptions about the role of citizens, the functioning of a police presence and the community as the site for policing. It is embedded in descriptions of the police delivering a service responsive to the community which in turn implies that citizens will engage with police officers and staff on patrol; that a police presence will provide an engagement function; and that communities will be identifiable units discernible to police officers and staff on patrol. This section will look at how the policy portrayal of police visibility in community engagement over the last forty years has shaped these assumptions about citizens, communities and policing.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that by using policy and academic literature to summarise the nature and practice of police visibility in community engagement in public policing over time, it is not the intention of this or subsequent chapters to suggest that the conceptualisations presented are the only ones that can be made on the topic or that they represent the experiences of all the populace. Indeed, the historical context of policing is complex wherein an intricate web of social, economic, political and structural influences, changes and challenges operating at national, and often differently at local levels has resulted in citizens experiencing and relating to policing activity and police personnel in different ways (Kelling and Moore, 1988). Therefore, in light of the clear difficulty in and lack of space for outlining all insights surrounding police visibility in community engagement work, the discussions presented in Chapters 1 and 2 derive from recognised trends in the literature.

The Brixton disorders in the early 1980s are a useful starting point for thinking about Community Policing reforms involving police visibility because they brought to the fore the clear disconnect that existed at the time between police officers and

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communities (Bullock, 2014). In his inquiry into the Brixton disorders, Lord Scarman (1981) highlighted that 'hard' policing styles characterised by aggressive, unlawful and racially prejudiced tactics together with inadequate consultation mechanisms had fuelled outrage, resentment and suspicion among citizens, particularly young people. Against this observation, he pointed out the importance of 'policing with the active consent and support of the community' which he likened to the 'friendly bobby-on-the-beat' (Scarman, 1981, p.88). The Scarman Report, according to Hattersley (HC Deb, 10 December 1981, Vol.14, cc1001-80), presented an opportunity for restoring a type of policing where the 'policeman' could 'once more become a visible, regular presence known to the local community.' In the years post Scarman, an ongoing programme of reform has demonstrated a tacit commitment to Community Policing in which police visibility, represented by the beat officer, has become a central feature (Bennett, 1994; Bullock, 2014).

Alongside Scarman's recommendations for improving police-community relations, police visibility developed in different ways and to varying degrees in and between forces through a number of community-oriented practices, summarised by Bennett (1993) as, including:

- Area-based foot patrols, also known as community constables
- Types of area-based policing
- Police-public contact strategies, such as police surgeries and door-to-door patrols
- Patrol initiatives involving dedicated, temporary or specialist officers in small teams attending a location to provide a police presence, address community problems or prevent a specific issue on a permanent or short-term basis

The Home Office (1993) White Paper *Police Reform* sought to co-ordinate these practices and provide official support for Community Policing more broadly by strengthening the organisation and delivery of policing (Bennett, 1994). Teams of officers, assigned to local command units, were each responsible for specific districts to 'establish clearer ownership of [areas] and in turn allow the community to identify

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them as their police officers' (Home Office, 1993, p.12). The move aimed to make policing 'a more local service, responsive to the needs of local communities' (Home Office, 1993, p.3). This idea of police visibility forming part of a service responsive to local communities is a theme that has been developed in subsequent policy portrayals of police officers and staff delivering community engagement, specifically within the two main Community Policing programmes adopted in the UK - Reassurance Policing and Neighbourhood Policing.

The disconnect between falling crime levels, public perception of rising crime, high levels of fear of crime and reduced public confidence in the police in the mid-1990s, named the 'reassurance gap', contributed to a policy of Reassurance Policing (Millie, 2014). A HMIC thematic inspection report by Sir Keith Povey (2001, p.viii) pinpointed that public reassurance is not simply influenced by objective crime statistics, but consists of many factors, including subjective perceptions of risk and order from signs, and direct or indirect experiences of crime and disorder in the local environment. The presence of uniformed police officers on the street was identified as a key contributor to the public sensing order in their surroundings, and while the number of 'bobbies on the beat' demanded by the public could not be practically delivered nor was it alone sufficient to reassure, enhancing the type of patrol that already existed was identified as one of the solutions (Povey, 2001, p.ix). A 'visible, accessible and familiar community-focused style of policing' where 'officers who are known and accessible – preferably on foot patrol – and who are skilled at engaging with local communities and their problems' was recommended to facilitate smarter interactions with the public and better information about local needs and expectations (Povey, 2001, p.ix and xiv). Povey's recommendations were implicitly endorsed by a government consultation exercise on police reform highlighting that the public wanted more visible, accessible and responsive policing, specifically 60% of participants were keen to convey their views by contact with officers on patrol (Home Office, 2003). The proposals underpinned the creation of PCSOs to increase police presence in localities and were further developed through the National Reassurance Policing Programme.

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Policing activities that targeted and problem-solved crime and disorder important to neighbourhoods; engaged the community in identifying priorities and taking action to tackle them; and involved visible, accessible and locally known police officers and staff were trialled as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme between 2003 and 2005 (Tuffin et al. 2006, p.xii). In relation to police visibility, the evaluation of the programme showed positive results in terms of improved public awareness of a police presence and familiarity with local officers and staff (Tuffin et al. 2006). However, it was noted that visibility and familiarity alone could not bring about shifts in public perception, and that a local policing strategy that combined engagement, problem-solving and visible patrol mechanisms would be more effective. Accordingly, foot patrol was pinpointed as another 'means of engagement' (Tuffin et al. 2006, p.63). The visibility, accessibility and familiarity of officers on foot patrol pursued in Reassurance Policing exemplified the notion of a responsive community-oriented service focused on the needs and experiences of the citizen introduced in earlier policy.

The National Reassurance Policing Programme was translated into the Neighbourhood Policing Programme and became a key component of a citizen-focused policing philosophy. The Neighbourhood Policing programme aimed for 'every community' to have a team of dedicated police officers and staff 'providing a visible, reassuring presence, preventing and detecting crime and developing constructive and lasting engagement' (Home Office, 2004b, p.7). It envisaged a 'new relationship' of 'active cooperation' between the police and public guided by a clear understanding of what each could expect from the other to deal with crime and disorder (Home Office, 2005, p.5). The public could expect to see and have regular contact with the same officers, influence local policing priorities and solutions, and hold the police and their partners to account (Home Office, 2005, p.5). At the same time, the police could anticipate the public sharing responsibility for community safety by communicating problems and participating in solutions to them, including joining crime prevention initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch or volunteering with a police force (Home Office, 2005, p.5).

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The transition to Neighbourhood Policing, set out in the Home Office (2004b, p.47) paper *Building Communities, Beating Crime*, was described in terms of driving citizen-focused policing, namely policing that is 'responsive to people's needs and performed as a shared undertaking with the active involvement of the public'. The policy argument for embedding structures to facilitate community engagement was presented using the results of public consultations which showed strong support for such measures. Casey (2008) in a review titled *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime* found that 75% of the 14,478 members of the public questioned were prepared to take an active role in tackling crime. Similarly, other public surveys highlighted that the majority of participants endorsed more involvement in policing, and specifically in relation to police visibility, favoured face-to-face contact with local police officers and staff (Flanagan, 2008; Home Office, 2003). Accordingly, an important aspect of this citizen-focused policing agenda was the police visibility provided by PCSOs, whose numbers were directed to increase in Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) (Home Office, 2006). In this way, responsiveness continued to be equated with visibility, and was linked to increasing public confidence, satisfaction and involvement in policing (Home Office, 2006).

Embedding and delivering successful Neighbourhood Policing, of which police officers and PCSOs being visible and accessible to local people was considered a crucial element, became an important concern in policing policy (Flanagan, 2008). Casey (2008) argued that the public identified police contact, access, visibility and responsiveness as important approaches, but viewed them as not being delivered well by the police. In response, the Home Office (2008, p.29) issued a *Policing Pledge* consisting of ten national standards for 'accessible and responsive local policing', including an assurance that 80% of NPTs' time on duty would be spent performing visible patrol at times and places where they were required. This commitment to police visibility remained an important objective for policing as it entered a period of austerity from 2010³ (HMIC, 2010). The spending cuts were characterised as a means

³ In 2010 the government declared a twenty per cent reduction in real terms of central funding to the police service between 2011 and 2015 (HM Treasury, 2010).

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of reducing government bureaucratic interference in policing to transfer power back to the people and restore the connection between the police and public, including giving the police more time to be visible and accessible on the streets, in communities (Home Office, 2010). Accordingly, sustaining police visibility was identified as a priority in any economising of operational policing to take account of the public valuing a police presence (HMIC, 2010, p.3-4).

A report by the Independent Police Commission (2013) recognised the budget cuts contributed to ‘tumultuous change’ and ‘huge challenges’ in public policing by making it difficult to improve or develop resources by spending money. The report reinforced the importance of protecting ‘visible, locally responsive policing’ provided by NPTs and warned that the ‘symbolic function of the police as guarantors of social order and legitimate governance’ should not be undermined by measures implemented by the police service to adapt to austerity, including developing relationships with the private sector (Independent Police Commission, 2013, p.13-16). In spite of official commentary, HMIC (2016) revealed that the continued demand on the police service to make efficiency savings over time had led to police forces inadequately investing in local policing. In particular, it was recorded that there had been a substantial decline in the number of people ‘seeing’ a uniformed police presence in their area (HMIC, 2016, p.10). The College of Policing (2018a) devised *Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines* in response to HMIC’s findings. The guidelines set out seven key areas of work for delivering and supporting Neighbourhood Policing⁴. Police visibility formed an essential element of the ‘engaging communities’ guideline, as illustrated in Figure 1 on p.15. It is described as ‘officers, staff and volunteers being responsible for and having a targeted visible presence in neighbourhoods’ to contribute to the overarching aims of providing an ‘ongoing two-way dialogue between the police and the public’ and enabling the

⁴ The seven areas covered by the guidelines are engaging communities; solving problems; targeting activity; promoting the right culture; building analytical capability; developing officers, staff and volunteers; and developing and sharing learning (College of Policing, 2018a, p.4).

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police ‘to develop a better understanding of communities, and their needs, risks and threats’ (College of Policing, 2018a, p.5).

The College of Policing (2018a) guidelines present the most up-to-date formulation of police visibility in community engagement work where it remains characterised as part of a service centred on, and responsive to, the community. The guidelines support the commitment to proactive policing in communities set out in the National Police Chief’s Council *Policing Vision 2025*; a ten-year policing plan signed up to by all police forces and their Police Crime Commissioners. The vision recognises the primacy of developing and utilising local police functions to keep people safe and provide an ‘effective, accessible and value for money service’ (APCC and NPCC, 2016, p.1-2). Moving forward, the Home Office (2019) has confirmed that Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services will use the guidelines to inform future inspections. In what could be considered a response to ongoing concerns that the demands on policing and reduced resources might obstruct the type of proactive neighbourhood practice proposed in the guidelines (HASC, 2018), the Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced ‘community support’ and ‘policing support’ volunteers to provide an additional policing resource. The Community Support Volunteer possesses fewer powers than a PCSO but is still able to complete a lot of the same tasks, including visible uniformed patrol. While this recent development is still in its infancy, it adds a new dimension to uniformed patrol work and how the police can be responsive to communities.

The preceding paragraphs provide a brief overview of Community Policing in the UK in the last forty years with a particular emphasis on the articulation of police visibility as a mechanism of community engagement. What becomes noticeable in the policy discourse is the repeated construction of police visibility as a service responsive to the community. These themes of service, responsiveness and community give rise to the assumptions that citizens will engage with police officers and staff on patrol; that a police presence will provide an engagement function; and that communities are identifiable units discernible to police officers and staff on patrol. Using academic literature, the next chapter will argue that these implicit policy assumptions

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perpetuate a romanticism about policing that reveals a lack of insight into the actual workings of police officers and staff on patrol in present-day communities.

Chapter 2

Blurred Police Visibility:

A Review of the Policy Assumptions

The policy portrayal of police visibility in community engagement work is structured around a number of implicit assumptions that suggests citizens will engage with police officers and staff on patrol; that a police presence will provide an engagement function; and that communities will be identifiable to police officers and staff on patrol. Taking each of these policy assumptions separately, this chapter will use the literature to challenge the narrative that surrounds the policy ideas around citizens, communities and policing in the 21st century. Through this presentation of academic work, the limited way in which it explores police visibility in community engagement practice, both in terms of the focus of studies and the research methods adopted, will be revealed. Summarising the review of the literature, the final section will conclude that the mechanics of how police visibility operates as an element of community engagement in Neighbourhood Policing is not clearly depicted in policing policy and research, especially not from a qualitative perspective, to set out the research questions that guided the PhD study.

Citizens will Engage with Police Officers and Staff on Patrol

Community Policing promotes the role of the community as an ‘active coparticipant’ in addressing local crime and disorder which, in the UK, has underpinned the broad philosophy of citizen-focused policing and the focus on community engagement in Neighbourhood Policing (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015, p.81; Myhill, 2012). Central to this policy agenda, as outlined in the last chapter, is the notion of empowering citizens to have ‘a greater voice in and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services’ to increase police accountability and responsiveness to the people they serve (Home Office, 2004a, p.3). Within this construction of community engagement, it is implied that the required ‘interest, willingness and ability of the public to play their part in a cooperative relationship with the police’, in this case

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engaging with police officers and staff on patrol, is already established (Bullock and Sindall, 2014, p.385). This notion of pre-existing citizen empowerment represents a flaw in the broader community engagement policy framework by presuming that it is something 'out there' to be tapped into, when in reality, it is structured by a 'cadre of professionals', including policymakers and practitioners, 'whose ability to sustain this discourse is indicative of the power they possess' (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p.15). This forms, what Chanan and Miller (2011, cited in Jacobson et al. 2014, p.69) conceptualise as, an 'empowerment misconception' whereby the government's commitment to giving power to people and communities overlooks the fact that people have invested power in the government in the first instance to do the things they want done collectively, and cannot be achieved by 'spasmodic citizen action'. The inconsistency between the policy construction of community engagement and the practice reality is identified in policing. Scholars highlight that the notion of the public being willing and able to participate is more complex than its policy depiction (Barnes and Eagle, 2007; Bullock, 2014).

Turning to the literature to explore the discrepancy between the policy and practice context, citizen engagement with police officers and staff on patrol is not an explicit focus in research. Instead, it appears to be a subject matter that is broadly considered in studies examining citizen participation in Community Policing and studies exploring citizen perception of patrol. This section will be divided into two parts to examine these respective areas of research. It will show the complex interaction of factors that can contribute to citizen engagement to question the policy assumption that all citizens will engage with police patrol. Throughout the analysis, the lack of qualitative insight into the individualities of citizen engagement with patrol, particularly in the context of Neighbourhood Policing in the UK, will be emphasised.

Citizen Participation - Community Policing

Research examining citizen participation in Community Policing considers the level of participation, and in terms of the UK, the evidence highlights limited public

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engagement with policing programmes. In contrast to the high levels of expressed public interest in becoming involved in policing efforts to deal with crime and disorder that is presented in policy (Casey, 2008; Flanagan, 2008; and Home Office, 2003), research pinpoints that it does not straightforwardly translate into direct action (Jacobson et al. 2014). Jacobson et al. (2014, p.68) show that only a marginal section of the population in England and Wales engage in some form of civic action or volunteering, and generally public interest in policing does not extend beyond a preference to know what the police are doing. This is broadly reflected in Bullock and Sindall's (2014) analysis of data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales which revealed that the majority of the population do not participate in Neighbourhood Policing. Relatedly, the evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme trial sites found that public attendance at police meetings was low varying between 12% and 32% (Tuffin et al. 2006). Taken together the generally low levels of citizen participation identified in Community Policing programmes in the UK suggests that despite expressing high levels of support most citizens do not engage with local policing. Furthermore, of those citizens that do engage, it is likely that they will disproportionately represent a specific cross section of the population, commonly referred to as the 'usual suspects' (Brodie et al. 2009). This issue of representation is a key concern in research exploring citizen participation in Community Policing, particularly in American policing (Myhill, 2012).

Studies point to a range of factors that not only impact upon citizens' willingness and capacity to engage in Community Policing programmes, but can result in unequal outcomes (Myhill, 2012). Herbert (2005, p.859) conducted research exploring residents' perceptions and experiences of Community Policing in a set of diverse neighbourhoods across Seattle. The study found that participants believed the state was responsible for providing security to its citizenry, they experienced the participatory procedures as tedious and time-consuming, and they felt that the complicated nature of the process placed poorer neighbourhoods at a competitive disadvantage with those in more affluent areas. Consequently, Herbert (2005) concluded that the extent of the state's 'offloading' of crime control which Community Policing expects is perceived as unwarranted; experienced as unfulfilling

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and unproductive; and is in practice illegitimate as it leads to the perpetuation of inequality. The relationship between social inequality and participation is again reflected in Skogan's (1998, p.90) evaluation of a Community Policing programme in Houston where efforts were more visible, and participation was more likely in predominantly white neighbourhoods. The finding was related to 'better-organized home-owning whites' being more prepared to make the most of the resources the programme brought, and police officers 'naturally' focusing their efforts on places where they believed they were well received and having more impact. Accordingly, these studies show how the processes of Community Policing programmes can be more advantageous to those who already enjoy social, political and economic benefits which partly reflects, and can be exacerbated by, how police officers interpret and apply Community Policing (Bullock, 2014). Putting aside the police role in community engagement as this will be covered in the next section, research identifies the range of dynamics involved in citizen participation in Community Policing programmes which brings to light the contradictory and conflicting nature of participation.

Academics document concerns about historic poor relations between the police and residents, particularly in deprived areas; a lack of awareness of the goals and tactics of the programmes; previous short-lived policing interventions; and the presence of mutual hostility, distrust and suspicion in crime-ridden neighbourhoods as impacting upon citizen's willingness to engage in Community Policing programmes (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Evidencing these issues and identifying additional barriers to participation, Grinc (1994), in an evaluation of eight Community Policing programmes, reported that in each case it was extremely difficult for the police to stimulate community resident participation related to high levels of fear; scepticism about the longevity of the programme; the heterogeneous populations and disorganisation that often characterise these communities; intragroup conflict among community leaders and residents; and the poor relationship between the police and residents in poor, minority communities that had historically been subjected to police abuses. Similarly, Rosenbaum and Lurigio (1994) identify, in a review of Community Policing studies, resident fear of victimisation and distrust of

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the police, especially in high-crime socially disadvantaged minority neighbourhoods, as influencing levels of participation. At the same time, research shows that negative attitudes towards the police and residence in deprived minority neighbourhoods do not necessarily hinder citizen participation in Community Policing programmes.

Frank et al. (1996) contends that those who hold unfavourable views of the police and are less satisfied with policing may feel more inclined to engage in policing initiatives. Looking at the individual and community-based indicators of participation in crime prevention in more detail, Pattavina, Bryne and Garcia (2006) found in their study in Boston that residents in high-crime neighbourhoods, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds; residents who feel they are part of the neighbourhood; and residents who believe the police get to know them, were more likely to become involved in community crime prevention activities. Comparably, research analysing citizen involvement in the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) consistently showed participation in police 'beat meetings' to be highest in poor, high-crime communities with bad housing; in predominantly African American beats; and in areas where other public services were not meeting residents' needs (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997; Skogan and Steiner, 2004). The inconsistency across studies examining citizen participation in Community Policing programmes shows that participation cannot be assumed to be dependent on the type of neighbourhood. Looking at the issues in more detail, research highlights how citizen participation is further obscured by the following three factors.

Firstly, participatory behaviour in Community Policing programmes might be shaped by specific types of citizen attitudes towards the police. Pattavina, Bryne and Garcia (2006) found that regardless of the level of crime in a neighbourhood the development of personal relationships between the police and residents was more significant to citizen involvement than perception of the effectiveness of Community Policing activities. The notion that attitudes relating to police treatment of citizens, specifically within personal interactions, is an important factor in participation links to the procedural justice literature (Bullock, 2014). Research shows that citizens' perceptions of fair treatment in their personal experiences with the police can

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increase cooperation with police crime prevention activity (Tyler and Fagan, 2008; Tyler and Jackson 2014). Acts of cooperation, as Hough et al. (2010, p.207) conclude, may strengthen the relationships between the police and public, and 'promote the view that addressing crime is a collaborative process'. Indeed, Reisig (2007) found that procedurally just policing tactics can have a positive impact on citizens' motivation to participate in Community Policing crime prevention activity, especially within moderate- and high-crime communities.

Secondly, a more complex relationship between neighbourhood social cohesion and citizen participation in formal crime prevention activity may exist. Studies show a connection between socially cohesive neighbourhoods and citizen intervention to deal with local problems (Bellair, 2000; Frank et al. 1996; Wells et al. 2006). However, these studies also indicate how residents in more cohesive neighbourhoods might not necessarily engage in formal crime prevention mechanisms, utilising instead informal social controls, such as surveillance by neighbours or expressing disapproval in subtle ways (Bellair, 2000; Wells et al. 2006). In contrast, research shows that residents in less cohesive communities are more likely to participate in organised crime prevention activity related to weak informal problem-solving capacities in these areas (Skogan, 1989, p.453). Relatedly, Pattavina, Bryne and Garcia (2006) found that one measure of social cohesion, 'rely on neighbours for help', was largely absent in high-crime neighbourhoods where participation in crime prevention was more likely. Accordingly, the authors suggest that the lack of private networks of support, such as neighbourly assistance, in high-crime neighbourhoods leads residents to engage with crime prevention activity delivered through parochial (i.e., community organisations) and public social control (i.e., the police) mechanisms as there are no other options available. This finding has been used to emphasise the importance of the 'new parochialism', namely 'semiformal practices co-produced by residents and formal agents of control', over dense interpersonal ties in bringing about effective neighbourhood control (Carr, 2003, p.1284). Additionally, it supports findings from the CAPS evaluation which showed citizen awareness and engagement in the programme to be associated with their involvement in existing community organisations, such as church (Skogan and Steiner, 2004).

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Finally, individual citizen characteristics may be influential in shaping participation in Community Policing programmes. While different people are active to different degrees across participatory activities, typical participants in forms of local-level decision-making, including those attending consultation groups/meetings and completing questionnaires, are considered more likely to be white, older, better educated, wealthy, middle-class and male (Brodie et al. 2009). Subsequently, it raises the issue of 'certain voices' in society, especially those from younger, non-white, lower socioeconomic groups, not being heard (Brodie et al. 2009). Analysis of the individual characteristics of participants in Community Policing programmes reveals a more mixed picture which suggests that community engagement in policing can have a broader reach than first assumed. Skogan and Steiner (2004) found that participation in CAPS was higher among African American, less educated, low-income and female residents. In relation to Neighbourhood Policing, Bullock and Sindall (2014) revealed some parallels with those considered to be the 'usual suspects' in participation, namely older people, people with more formal education and those who are more confident in the police, but also showed participation across other groups. White people were no more likely to participate in Neighbourhood Policing than those of other ethnicities, while social renters, victims of crime and those who felt that they lived in high-crime areas were all more likely to participate. Taken together the findings examining the individual characteristics of participation in Community Policing programmes indicates that participation is largely distributed amongst those populations who need it most and is driven by concern about crime (Bullock and Sindall, 2014; Skogan and Steiner, 2004).

The preceding paragraphs present research examining citizen participation in Community Policing. The studies provide insights into a broad spectrum of interconnecting influences, ranging from socio-demographic factors through to neighbourhood structures, that suggest the nature of citizen participation in Community Policing to be more complex than all citizens straightforwardly engaging with police officers. However, there are features of these studies which make it difficult to directly apply the findings to citizen engagement with patrol. To begin

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with, the studies consider citizen engagement at the macro-level. Whether examining the level and nature of citizen participation (Bullock and Sindall, 2014; Frank et al. 1996; Herbert, 2005; Pattavina, Bryne and Garcia, 2006); analysing informal control mechanisms (Bellair, 2000); evaluating specific Community Policing programmes (Grinc, 1994; Skogan, 1998; Skogan and Steiner, 2004; and Tuffin et al. 2006); or exploring the influence of citizen's views or personal experiences of policing on participation (Hough et al. 2010; Tyler and Fagan, 2008; Tyler and Jackson, 2014; and Reisig, 2007), the studies make generalised conclusions about citizen engagement with Community Policing, largely within an American policing context. Moreover, when citizen engagement with specific Community Policing methods is considered, these are usually formal in nature, such as police organised meetings, and police patrol does not feature. If police visibility is referenced, it is simply in terms of ascertaining the extent to which citizens have seen a police officer (Tuffin et al. 2006), as opposed to considering the nature of citizen engagement with patrol. Related to this restricted focus of the studies, with the exception of Herbert (2005), Grinc (1994) and Skogan and Steiner (2004), they exclusively use survey data and quantitative analysis to examine citizen participation. The preoccupation with quantitative methods in this area of research makes it difficult to gain a micro-level understanding of citizen participation, such as understanding the influences on citizen engagement in the everyday context of Community Policing, and more specifically in relation to Neighbourhood Policing in the UK. Some of these identified limitations are noticeable when research is more focused on police patrol as the next section will show.

Citizen Perception of Police Patrol

Turning to research examining police visibility, there are numerous American studies of patrol where a citizen perspective is explored, usually in terms of citizen perception of crime and policing. The *Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment* used an experimental research design to examine variations in the level of routine vehicle patrol across 15 Kansas City 'beat' areas (Kelling et al. 1974). It found no

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significant differences in citizen attitudes towards the police and no effect on citizen fear of crime thus leading the researchers to confirm that vehicle patrol is less noticeable and has little to no consequence on crime and the community. This focus on citizen fear of crime and attitudes towards the police was replicated in the *Newark Foot Patrol Experiment* which found the presence of foot patrol to improve feelings of safety and citizen perception of the police (Kelling et al. 1981). A more recent experiment by Simpson (2017) confirmed that police officers are generally perceived more favourably when presented on bike or on foot in comparison to a vehicle. However, these analyses of citizen perception, as researchers in the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment acknowledged, lack a more in-depth consideration of what happens between police officers and the public on patrol. There are a number of studies which focus more on the interventions delivered by police officers on foot patrol.

A study on *Reducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark* evaluated, as part of Community Policing programmes in both cities, contacts made by police officers on patrol with neighbourhood residents to determine and address local problems (Pate et al. 1985 and 1986). In terms of citizen impact, the results showed reductions in levels of perceived crime and disorder, less fear and concern about crime and improved evaluations of the police service. The close police-public contact established during the programmes, specifically police officers having frequent discussions with citizens, was identified as significant to their success. While the study showed that positive police contact with citizens on patrol to develop familiarity is an important factor in their assessments of crime and policing, the contact was police-initiated with police officers, in a lot of cases, attending residents' addresses and/or completing structured questionnaires to elicit information. This combined with the study only considering the resident perspective in terms of fear of crime, perception of crime and satisfaction with the police resulted in little detail about the nature of citizen engagement and the more informal unplanned contact in the public space during patrol. This critique is similarly perceptible in the research *Evaluating a Neighbourhood Foot Patrol Experiment in Flint* (Trojanowicz, 1982), in a study of *Policing Houston: Reducing Fear and Improving Service* (Brown and Wycoff,

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1987) and in a UK-based study exploring *The Effectiveness of a Police Initiated Fear Reducing Strategy* (Bennett, 1991). Overcoming some of these limitations, there are a couple of studies that concentrate on exploring police-public contact on patrol for the purpose of developing community engagement.

Vernon and Lasley's (1992) experiment exploring the use of Community Policing to restore order and identify initiatives that can build police-public partnerships in Los Angeles involved police officers patrolling on foot, bicycle and horseback to increase positive interpersonal contacts and a group of police officers working alongside community groups to 'maximise informal positive contacts with citizens' (Vernon and Lasley, 1992, p.20). Examining the nature of the resulting police-public partnership, the resident survey questionnaires found that regular visible contact (only) of officers; frequent face-to-face contact, particularly daily personal contact, with officers; and contact with officers in the home or in both homes and on the street were influential in enhancing residents' attitudes around partnerships with the police and improving relationships with the police. Furthermore, the researchers discovered that officers' demeanour and politeness in face-to-face contacts with residents, most notably residents believing that 'officers cared about them as a person', significantly improved residents' opinions of partnerships with the police. The research highlighted that informal police/citizen interaction, from seeing officers to having personal contact with them, and officer expressions of helpfulness and understanding during citizen contacts are important parts of building relationships with the public on police patrol. These findings are reinforced by the previous procedural justice studies referenced on pages 33 and 34, which highlight the influence of perceptions of fairness, decency and attentiveness in public cooperation and participation in policing activity.

More recently, Cowell and Kringen's (2016) qualitative research on foot patrol as a community engagement strategy in five US states developed the citizen perspective on interaction with police officers on patrol. The study revealed that citizens are more likely to engage with foot patrol because it humanises police officers, makes them more approachable and increases the opportunities for interaction in

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comparison to motorised patrol. The preceding studies indicate that citizen engagement with patrol is influenced by the type of patrol and the nature of the interaction with police officers. However, the majority of this research took place in the US, and with the exception of Cowell and Kringen (2016), most of the findings are over twenty years old and/or derived from quantitative evaluation. Together these features limit the studies comparability to the current landscape of UK policing and a fuller understanding of the nature of citizen engagement with the police on patrol.

Turning specifically to the UK policing context, there are a number of studies considering a citizen perspective of police visibility which reflect some of the findings from the US foot patrol studies, particularly in terms of highlighting how patrol can be an important factor in both how people relate to the police and their overall understandings of policing. A preference for foot patrol was identified in Shapland and Vagg's (1987) study of local policing in six areas in the UK to understand citizen's perceptions of nuisances, problems and crime, and ways to deal with them. Using interviews and observations, the researchers pinpointed four roles local people considered the police should undertake including the police providing a 'visible symbol of order and normality' by increasing the amount of foot patrol to enable police officers to be more visible, to act as a deterrent and to make them more available for the public to pass on their concerns (Shapland and Vagg, 1987, p.58). This desire for increased police visibility was highlighted by Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009) in their examination of data from the *Metropolitan Police Public Attitudes Survey* which included questions regarding experience of and feelings about the police. The analysis indicated that if people perceive an increase in police patrol activity it is likely their opinions of the police will improve. Moreover, the study identified that perceptions of police visibility and how informed people feel about police actions are linked to judgements about police effectiveness, fairness and community engagement. These findings, as the researchers suggest, highlight how police visibility offers a more substantive type of contact than what is often inferred from the insatiable public demand for more bobbies on the beat. This focus on increased police patrol and better communication in thinking about how the public make sense of community engagement is indirectly reinforced by Crawford, Lister

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and Wall's (2003) study of *Contracted Community Policing in New Earswick*. While the Community Policing initiative sought to increase police visibility, a number of implementation issues led to it not fulfilling its objectives and being terminated early. However, the subsequent analysis of what went wrong drew attention to the importance of good and consistent communication between the police and public to build relationships. Taken as a whole, these studies share some of the benefits and drawbacks identified in the US research. They show the communicative function of police visibility as an aspect influencing citizen engagement with policing, but they lack the detail about the nature of the interaction and its role in citizen engagement, again possibly related to the research focus and/or method in the studies.

Exploring a citizen perspective of police visibility in more recent times, the literature is predominantly concerned with PCSOs. A lot of these studies are interested to understand public perception of the PCSO role related to the auxiliaries wearing a uniform and having a police identity, but not holding full policing powers. Initial academic commentary highlighted that an important part of the public understanding a PCSO presence is how distinguishable they are from other uniformed patrol officers, particularly in light of the pluralised nature of security work in public spaces (de Carmargo, 2019). Cooke (2005) questioned the extent to which the addition of PCSOs to the pool of other authority figures providing a visible presence could bring about public reassurance, especially given the continued prevalence of the traditional imagery of the police constable as the 'bobby on the beat' in public notions of lawful authority and legitimacy in policing. It not only created the potential for the public to find it difficult to differentiate between policing roles but could lead to a 'diluting' of the significance accorded to them and impact upon how the public engage with police officers and staff (Cooke, 2005, p.238). Following the introduction of PCSOs, 312 resident surveys in one London borough revealed the majority of respondents felt 'more reassured' by the PCSO presence, believed that their work had helped to reduce their fear of crime 'a lot' or 'a little', and 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that 'PCSOs provided an effective way of meeting the public's demand for a greater police presence on the street' (Johnson, 2005). In terms of accessibility, a large proportion of the same respondents

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considered PCSOs to provide an important link between the local community and the police.

Reflecting the initial encouraging reception of PCSOs, Cooper et al. (2006) determined from their evaluation, comprising 17 focus groups with local residents and 12 mini-group discussions with local businesses across 3 case study areas, a largely positive perception of the auxiliaries. In two areas, PCSOs were well-known by name and residents and local businesses felt they had made a real impact, particularly in dealing with youth disorder. In localities where PCSOs had been deployed for longer periods of time residents expressed feeling safer, and when residents voiced uncertainty about their local PCSOs, it usually related to a lack of publicity about the role and them having little direct experience of the auxiliaries. These findings were broadly reflected in Paskell's (2007) study which included interviews with residents in 8 geographical areas. While the PCSOs generally seemed to occupy a low profile with many expressing a preference for police officers, PCSOs exhibited a higher profile among residents with whom their paths crossed during their patrol. It was these residents, and those in areas where PCSOs had been dedicated for some time, that were identified as approving of the role and perceiving the auxiliaries to have improved local policing.

These earlier studies show a largely favourable public perception of PCSOs and indicate that, similar to the US foot patrol studies, those who have contact and knowledge of policing representatives tend to be more positive about the role. However, they are heavily focused upon public perception of the role as opposed to public experience of the role in a patrol context, which results in little additional insight into what shapes public engagement with PCSOs during their foot patrols. Subsequent studies have maintained this restrictive lens by continuing to concentrate on public perception of PCSOs and their perceived impact. Pamment's (2009) observations and semi-structured interviews with 15 young offenders highlighted that they recognised the PCSO role but did not view it as credible, primarily due to the PCSOs lack of policing powers. Paskell (2007, p.356) noted similar reactions from young people she encountered in her study, some of whom had

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nicknamed PCSOs 'plastic police' or 'mobile scarecrows'. Examining more specifically the impact of PCSOs on fear of anti-social behaviour and crime in one borough of Cheshire using 570 postal questionnaires, Hill (2010) discerned that the majority of respondents had little knowledge of their local PCSOs or understanding of their impact on 'quality of life' issues⁵. Hill used the findings to highlight the need for more publicity about the local PCSOs to residents. Similarly, Rowland and Coupe (2014) identified in their study that the role and status of PCSOs still requires public advertisement. The researchers conducted 517 survey interviews with customers in five shopping centres across the South of England. Measuring perceptions of safety and worry instilled by different types of patrol officer, the researchers found that respondents were able to distinguish between police officers and PCSOs, and perceived police officers to offer higher levels of reassurance than their PCSO counterparts. In addition, PCSOs were measured as evoking lower levels of reassurance than other non-police uniformed patrol staff.

The more recent studies explore a citizen standpoint on police patrol in the UK through examining perception of PCSO visibility. They show some support for the notion that knowledge and familiarity of PCSOs in certain situations may be influential in citizen engagement, however they restrict understanding in a number of ways. Firstly, the studies are overwhelmingly interested in citizen awareness of and reaction to the PCSO role, specifically in terms of whether it provides reassurance, which makes it difficult to draw insights about what influences citizen engagement with the auxiliaries in the course of patrol. This is further problematised by the studies being unable to ascertain the degree to which the research participants could distinguish PCSOs from their police officer counterparts. Johnston (2005) highlighted that the surveys assumed residents could differentiate between PCSOs and police officers, however respondents may have misidentified PCSOs and/or the policing tasks they were responsible for completing. This is likely given Paskell's (2007) experience of interviewees expressing confusion over PCSOs'

⁵ The 'quality of life' issues in the survey were identified as teenagers gathered on streets; vandalism; graffiti; drug activity; and nuisance behaviours in public.

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identity, roles and powers with some admitting that they had mistaken the auxiliaries for police officers or wardens. Furthermore, Paskell (2007) noted that, in some instances, participants asserted positive sentiments about PCSOs but had little in the way of personal experience of the auxiliaries to support their claims making it difficult to assess the extent to which residents felt reassured by them.

Secondly, there is a disregard for police officers and their visibility. When police officers are considered, it is to examine the extent to which PCSOs can provide comparable public confidence and reassurance. Thirdly, several of the studies used survey research with fixed-choice questioning which, as Hill (2010) recognised, prevented respondents from substantiating their answers. This resulted in unexplained discrepancies in the findings, such as in Hill's (2010) study 76% of respondents stated that they would like to see more PCSOs recruited despite also reporting little to no understanding of the impact of PCSOs in their localities or expressing the view that the auxiliaries had been ineffective at addressing issues. Another limitation identified by Rowland and Coupe (2014) in their research was that any attitude survey relies on respondents' interpretations, which can not only differ between them, but change for the same individuals over time. Taken together, these identified shortcomings highlight that even if the research can be used to indicate that awareness and experience of a PCSO presence in some circumstances is important in citizen engagement with police patrol, it does not explain the specific circumstances in which this can occur, if it is PCSOs the public believe they are experiencing and how citizens engage with police officer visibility.

A number of studies touch upon interactions between PCSOs and the public through which inferences can be made about citizen engagement with patrol at the micro-level. Crawford et al.'s (2005) analysis of different patrol personnel using qualitative and quantitative data from 6 focused case studies highlighted that it is the 'manner' in which PCSOs interact with the public that influences public confidence and fosters reassurance. This was an area of practice that was identified as lacking with PCSOs sometimes appearing uncertain about what to do on foot patrol and members of the public mentioning that the auxiliaries appeared at times unapproachable,

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particularly when they were engaged in conversation with each other. The implied link between citizen perception of the approachability of PCSOs and the communicative availability of PCSOs is referenced in other studies. Cooper et al. (2006) and Long, Robinson and Senior (2006, p.20) in their evaluations of PCSOs, which included focus groups and surveys with residents, identified the importance of the auxiliaries developing 'interactional street skills' to both be able to appropriately communicate with people and deal with their concerns, and demonstrate this ability to people around them. However, what these communicative skills specifically resemble in practice and their influence on citizen engagement is not explored. Instead, there appears a broader focus on the amount and quality of PCSO interactions with the public. Crawford et al. (2005) highlighted the importance of PCSOs exhibiting high ethical and professional standards in their interactions to deal with the public appropriately. Long, Robinson and Senior (2006, p.6-7) repeated this sentiment, and also outlined that consideration should be given to the levels of interaction the auxiliaries have with the public. Here the concern was for the potential quantity of PCSO contact with the public overwhelmingly contributing to 'community cohesion' over 'crime reduction'. The brief exploration of PCSO interactions at the micro-level from a citizen perspective links in with Cowell and Kringen's (2016) finding that the perceived approachability of policing representatives on patrol influences citizen engagement. It emphasises the communicative dimension to police visibility, however the studies do not expand upon the actual nature of contact the public experience with PCSOs, and how it can influence their awareness of the auxiliaries and the work that they do.

The studies presented in the second part of this section explore more specifically a citizen perspective of police patrol. They challenge the policy assumption that citizens will straightforwardly engage with police officers and staff by showing that particular factors are influential in their perception of police patrol, including the type of patrol, the perceived approachability of police officers and staff, and the amount and nature of contact that takes place. However, a lot of the findings are based on experimental research designs conducted in the US across previous decades which reduces their comparability to contemporary policing in the UK. Furthermore, when

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more recent UK policing studies are considered, they predominantly use survey research to explore public perception of PCSOs, which is equally limiting for examining in more depth the dynamics of citizen engagement with patrol. The next section will continue to develop the complex relationship between citizens and the police in the delivery of community engagement work by examining the police perspective through the policy assumption that police visibility provides an engagement function.

A Police Presence Will Provide an Engagement Function

The contention that more police results in positive outcomes for communities, particularly in terms of reducing crime, is an often-cited theory by citizens and officials that has become a 'general doctrine' in public policy and supported the expansion of police patrol work (Sherman, 1998b, p.227). The public value accorded to a uniformed police patrol is related to officers representing 'the symbol of concern and security' (Bahn, 1974, p.4) and through their presence being able to communicate 'a sense of guardianship' in localities (Innes and Fielding, 2002, Para 8.4). The communicative significance of policing, as detailed in the introduction, was recognised in the SCP, developed in the programme of Reassurance Policing, and remained prominent in the transition to Neighbourhood Policing through high-visibility policing (Barker, 2014). However, the resulting narrative around the policy development of uniformed patrol akin to Neighbourhood Policing supposes that its implementation is an outcome in itself, that is police officers and staff by virtue of their presence will be able to deliver an engagement function (Barnes and Eagle, 2007). In actuality, a number of cultural and organisational issues impacting upon the delivery of community engagement have been identified by researchers concerned with policy implementation, which indicates that police visibility in community engagement work is more complicated than first assumed (Myhill, 2012; Lloyd and Foster, 2009; Simmonds, 2015). This section will review the literature to explore these cultural and organisational issues in policing which have implications for implementing community engagement to both highlight that police officers and staff

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on patrol are not instinctively equipped to engage with the public and show the lack of qualitative inquiry into the 'craft' of patrol work to develop this area of policing.

Cultural Influences on Community Engagement

The shift to Neighbourhood Policing emphasised 'soft policing' functions, 'defined as the non-coercive aspects of police-led social control encompassing the provision of a visible presence of authority, persuasion, negotiation and community interaction' (Innes, 2005, p.157). These are identified as conflicting with the 'hard policing functions', such as catching criminals and maintaining public order, that require a more direct execution of coercion and tend to be preferred and valued by frontline police officers (Innes, 2005, p.157). The resulting tension is seen as being exacerbated by the police occupational culture which interprets softer policing functions as a direct challenge to the 'orthodoxy of what constitutes 'real' police work' (Innes, 2005, p.165). Consequently, policing commentators pinpoint that widespread cultural change is necessary for a 'community engagement philosophy' to be accepted (Myhill, 2012; Lloyd and Foster, 2009; Simmonds, 2015). The academic literature around police culture, as this section will set out, focuses on the construction of police officers and PCSOs' occupational identities and orientations to Community Policing functions. Within this debate, it is discernible that police officers and staff are not necessarily predisposed to community engagement work. However, the research is grounded in the internal organisational environment and neglects a fuller exploration of the practice context in making sense of and developing the cultural influences in policing.

The occupational culture of the rank and file is recognised as an important influence on officers' 'frames of reference, coping strategies, practice knowledge and 'common-sense' understandings' that inform their decisions and actions (Bacon, 2014, p.103-104). The traditional characterisation of police culture emphasises officers' exaggerated sense of mission; preference for crime control and action-oriented activity; and conservative, cynical, suspicious and machismo disposition

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(Reiner, 2000). According to this 'orthodox' perspective, community work is afforded a low status with police culture negatively influencing the way police officers think about and interact with citizens and cultivating a police identity that is resistant to change (McConville and Shepherd, 1992; Loftus, 2010). From 'respectables' and 'roughs' (Cain, 1973); 'prigs' and 'scumbags' (Young, 1991); 'rubbish', 'challengers' and 'disarmers' (Holdaway, 1983); to 'suspicious persons', 'assholes' and 'know nothings' (Van Maanen, 1974), research has documented the different categorisations police officers use to create distance between themselves and the public. The thought of then working with the public is one, Skogan et al. (1999, p.22) note, that is met with disdain as police officers fear the 'community loud mouths' will take charge and their work will resemble 'social work' or 'wave and smile' policing. This type of opposition is reflected in US studies showing frontline police officers to be less committed and more resistant to Community Policing (Garcia, 2002; Sadd and Grinc, 1994), and in terms of the UK, this has been found to be more prevalent among younger officers (Bennett and Lupton, 1992).

Despite the traditional cultural influence in police officers' assessments and acceptance of Community Policing, there are a number of studies which show that the initial ambivalence of police officers towards adopting a Community Policing approach is replaced with enthusiasm once officers experience the advantages of contact with the public (Brown and Wycoff, 1987; Pate et al. 1986). Cowell and Kringen (2016) identified that many of the police officers in their study initially did not want to do foot patrol, but they found it rewarding and beneficial related to the increase in positive interactions they experienced with citizens. The potential for a variation in cultural characteristics is emphasised by some academics who argue that the orthodox narrative of police culture oversimplifies police practices and neglects the development of police sub-cultures. Waddington (1999, p.287) argues that a misleading interpretation of police culture has developed from researchers using officers' 'canteen talk', often comprising exaggerated expressive chatter, to 'explain and condemn a broad spectrum of policing practice' when it is detached from and not reflective of police action on the street. Following this line of argument, it is reasoned that to understand police culture strictly in terms of its traditional

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conception risks presenting it as 'singular, monolithic and unchanging' when there is other research that shows important differences within and between a range of police sub-cultures (Foster, 2003, p.196).

Cain (1973) identified that 'city' police officers defined 'real police work' as solely dealing with crime, but 'county' police officers' explained their work in accordance with the community's perception of their role and the crimes that were important. The variation in officers' attitudes and approaches to police work, particularly in relation to patrol work, is also captured in the different officer typologies identified in research. Based on in-depth interviews and observations with rank-and-file officers in California, Muir (1977, p.56-57) identified four types of officer: the 'avoider'; the 'enforcer'; the 'reciprocator' and the 'professional' who could be distinguished in a number of ways, including the extent to which they could understand and relate to the citizenry. Similarly, from in-depth interviews with rank-and-file officers in the UK, Reiner (1978) distinguished typical patterns in the police outlook as the 'bobby', the 'uniform carrier', the 'new centurion', the 'social worker', the 'professional' and the 'Federation activist'. According to these typologies, the 'bobby' interpreted the role as involving some social service aspects, but mainly focusing on crime prevention whereas the 'new centurion' considered the role should concentrate on crime control and the 'professional' observed the role as many functions. The notion that police officers foster different styles of working in response to the operational environment is reinforced by Ramshaw's (2012) ethnographic fieldwork of a Community Policing Team. The research highlighted that individual patrolling police officers approached their work in various ways, including the 'intelligence gatherer' who focused foot patrol on completing crime-related work; the 'order restorer' who used foot patrol as a way to deal with local problems; and the 'meet and greet walker' who embraced foot patrol as a method of liaising and developing relationships with the local community. All these studies show how police officers can develop ways of working that reflect, expand on or restrict the traditional occupational culture and can influence the degree to which they are amenable to engaging with the community on patrol.

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Organisational changes, such as the introduction of softer policing functions, are also identified as stimulating transformations in occupational cultures (Beech and Johnson, 2005). Davies and Thomas (2008, p.639), in their small-scale ethnographic study, discovered that police officers were 're-crafting' the Community Policing discourse to be 'more closely aligned with their personal interests, sectional interests and their different understandings of occupational identities' resulting in identities that acknowledged and identities that resisted the legitimacy of the community. Indeed, Fielding (1995, p.11) points out that cultural variance is likely in the Community Policing context as its social work orientation can distance officers from 'customary occupational perspectives' and make them 'critics as well as insiders'. Recognising the capacity of police officers to change their cultural understandings to align with organisational changes, Chan (1997, p.225) theorises a new framework that considers police practice in terms of the interaction between certain structural conditions of police work (the field) and the cultural knowledge police officers build up (habitus) to draw attention to the 'active role played by police actors in developing, reinforcing, resisting or transforming cultural knowledge and institutionalised practice'. Evidencing the potential for a 're-negotiation' of police culture in Community Policing, O'Neill and McCarthy (2014) studied partnership work and Neighbourhood Policing and discovered that the conventional cultural leaning towards pragmatism among police officers facilitated multi-agency working. Pragmatism enabled the officers to navigate and value their relationships with other agencies to achieve productive outcomes. The finding highlighted how traditional cultural expressions can be 'disturbed' and are receptive to change (O'Neill and McCarthy, 2014, p.16). However, scholars also emphasise how the occupational culture is not always responsive to change, especially in Community Policing work.

The extent to which police officers' cultural knowledge can adapt to the principles and mechanisms of Community Policing is questioned, particularly in relation to patrol work where the mixed market of provision risks reducing its status as a 'desirable and distinctive aspect of police work' (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015, p.78). Using data from an ethnographic study of police culture, Loftus (2009) found that the dominant features in the traditional characterisation of police culture, including a

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sense of mission, preference for crime-fighting and celebration of masculine exploits, continued to be evident in the discourses, interactions and views of police officers and influenced their day-to-day work. Similarly, Davies and Thomas (2008, p.639) identified in their research the construction of a pervasive macho, masculine, and subjective position among police officers to counter the 'pink and fluffy' feminised imagery perceived by them as representing community-focused work. The civilianisation of patrol presented the opportunity to disrupt the traditional police culture and generate alternative police subcultures, particularly in relation to increasing the desirability of community engagement in policing, which has formed a significant part of research examining the PCSO role (Cosgrove, 2010).

The introduction of PCSOs was an attempt to restore the significance of patrol and Neighbourhood Policing, diversify the staff group and make the workforce more representative of local communities (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; HMIC, 2004). Consequently, early research was focused on the integration and recruitment profile of PCSOs entering the police organisation. Studies identified PCSOs struggling to fully assimilate into policing teams due to poor communication of their role and responsibilities; a lack of acceptance by their team members; and insufficient management of their work and personal development needs (Cooper et al. 2006; Johnson, 2005). The combination of few resources to oversee the civilianising programme and a general scepticism and disapproval of the new auxiliary role by police officers was pinpointed as contributing to PCSOs receiving an unwelcoming reception (Cooper et al. 2006; Johnson, 2005; Pamment, 2006). Initial portrayals of PCSO membership revealed the recruitment process to be successfully attracting applicants from underrepresented groups, including persons older in age, from ethnic minorities and with wide-ranging previous work experiences (Cooper et al. 2006; Johnston, 2006). However, despite this initial diverse recruitment profile, Johnston (2006) highlighted the inadequate organisational support to continue to recruit and retain staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. Exploring more closely the assimilation of the auxiliaries into the policing organisation, studies have analysed PCSOs cultural identity and its influence on their working relationships and practice, specifically in relation to their community engagement remit.

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The integration of PCSOs into mixed policing teams improved relations between the auxiliaries and police officers (HMIC, 2004). Merritt (2010), using semi-structured interviews and focus groups, found that perception of the auxiliaries had evolved inside the organisation with less ideological resistance towards the role. Thinking more specifically about the extent of their integration into NPTs, O'Neill (2017) examined how PCSOs presented themselves to and interacted with their police officer counterparts. Using insights from ethnographic fieldwork, O'Neill (2017) revealed that PCSOs' performances related to the nature of the teams they worked in. PCSO performances in 'complementary teams' involving collaborative working practices appreciative of PCSOs comprised telling stories that emphasised the 'exciting' and 'engaging' parts of their work, for example crime control activities. This allowed the auxiliaries to demonstrate their value to policing and increase the congruence between their organisational identity and the reality of their work to colleagues (O'Neill, 2019, p.130). In contrast, PCSO performances in 'competitive teams' involving non-collaborative practices that undervalued PCSOs encompassed a 'work to rule approach' and use of stories to 'justify' their actions. This reflected the auxiliaries lack of expectation in relation to their organisational identity and an accompanying sense that they did not need to prove themselves to their colleagues (O'Neill, 2019, p.131). While O'Neill (2019) showed that PCSOs function in a separate performance team to PCs, de Camargo (2019) identified that the auxiliaries can also be reorganised into new performance teams. Using findings from an ethnographic study of PCSOs, de Camargo (2019) explored how the auxiliaries can construct their identity performances through their uniform. The analysis uncovered that some PCSOs purposely made modifications to their uniforms, including concealing PCSO markings/insignia and wearing black tops, to give the impression they were PCs and increase their organisational legitimacy. However, the misrepresentation of their uniform was perceived by both PC and PCSO colleagues as a deviation from the 'performance norm' and they were derisively re-classified as wannabe PCs. These studies show how PCSOs despite representing a softer policing function do not straightforwardly affiliate themselves with community engagement work inside the organisation.

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Developing how PCSO identity is constructed in their orientations to work, Merritt (2010) identified that the role itself had evolved to encompass a range of crime control and community focused policing activities to the extent that PCSO practice could be viewed along a continuum; from a 'junior enforcer' with a responsibility to support PCs in their work at one extreme to a 'bridge builder' or 'uniformed community development worker' at the other. The observed emergence of enforcement and community support practices in the PCSO role is pinpointed by Cosgrove (2010) in her exploration of how the auxiliaries developed an occupational identity. From conducting an appreciative ethnography of PCSOs, Cosgrove (2010) identified tensions in the role created from the civilian status and community support function being at odds with the masculinised organisational environment that prioritised and valued crime-fighting and control. This was further complicated by the majority of PCSOs, at least in Cosgrove's study, striving to become fully warranted police officers. To distinguish the ways in which PCSOs negotiated the conflicts in their role and oriented themselves with the dominant police occupational culture, Cosgrove (2016) developed a three-fold typology. 'Disillusioned PCSOs' distanced themselves from the role and organisation fostering an apathetic approach to their work and cynical stance towards career progression. 'Frustrated PCSOs' strongly committed themselves to crime control activities to align themselves as closely as possible with the organisational mandate and work towards becoming PCs. 'Professional PCSOs', influenced to a lesser extent by the dominant culture, sought to fulfil the original intent and purpose of the role to gain experience and develop police 'craft skills'.

The struggle for legitimacy that features in research examining PCSOs' cultural identities brings to light how the auxiliaries can easily gravitate away from their community engagement remit. This is something that is likely to be further complicated by continued changes in the organisational environment, including the recent pluralisation of police staff functions. O'Neill (2019) indicates that the introduction of voluntary police staff roles will potentially develop PCSOs' cultural experiences and performances within their teams. An early evaluation of Volunteer

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Police Community Support Officers in Lincolnshire Police highlighted a largely discouraging perception of the new role inside the organisation due to concerns that it could replace, as oppose to complement, existing PCSO functions (Strudwick, Jameson and Rowe, 2017).

The academic examination of police occupational culture shows how it can shape the motivations, understandings, experiences and working practices of police officers and staff to the extent that they are not all necessarily open to working with citizens in the way the policy depiction of community engagement envisages. Crime control, even in NPTs where the focus is on softer policing, remains an important part of how some police officers and staff make sense of their work which conflicts with the idea that police officers, and more specifically PCSOs, will actively position themselves to engage with citizens on patrol. Indeed, reviews of police research and practice repeatedly acknowledge that the successful implementation of community engagement requires the widespread development of the police occupational culture to understand and value citizens and communities (Lloyd and Foster, 2009; Myhill, 2012; Simmonds, 2015). At the same time, the focus on how police officers and staff negotiate the internal organisational environment to make sense of the delivery of Community Policing functions, such as community engagement, shifts the focus away from the actualities of what they do in the external practice environment and how this can shape cultural understandings of policing. This neglect of the practice context is further evidenced by research exploring the organisational influences on community engagement.

Organisational Influences on Community Engagement

The cultural preference for short-term enforcement-oriented approaches to crime control in policing is maintained by the overarching organisational structures and procedures valuing and prioritising this area of work which presents further challenges for the implementation of community engagement (Gilling, 2008; Myhill, 2012; Simmonds, 2015). Manning (1997) explains how the police organisation is set

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an impossible and burdensome mandate to prevent, control, deter and punish crime. It is impossible because the police are constrained in fulfilling a crime control mission by a number of structural factors ranging from limited access to crime-relevant information and private spaces to depending on the public for cooperation, and this is compounded by the bulk of their time being consumed by non-crime related activity. At the same time, it becomes burdensome because, despite the identified structural shortcomings, the police consistently seek to legitimate themselves as a crime-fighting agency which hinders them both in terms of the public understanding their limitations in controlling crime and accepting alternative views of their role, including their capacity to adopt a Community Policing approach. Community Policing represents policing 'with' and 'for' the community as opposed to policing 'of' the community (Tilley, 2003, p.315). It 'marks and dramatizes the service aspect of policing, suppresses the dirty work and violent aspects, and promises a police-public dynamic' (Manning, 1997, p.13). Accordingly, Community Policing contradicts the police definition of their role and instils a tension in the ability of the organisation to fully integrate and provide a community-oriented service to neighbourhoods. Reviewing the literature, this section will show how a range of organisational influences exacerbate this contradiction in policing. It will highlight how it cannot be assumed police officers and staff on patrol can deliver an engagement function and it will expose the lack of qualitative insight into what police officers and staff should do on patrol to engage with the public.

The emphasis on performance in policing is one aspect of the organisational environment that is identified as contributing to the resilience of skills, values and beliefs supportive of harder policing functions in the traditional occupational culture (Loftus, 2010; Wood et al. 2014). The centralised performance management process in UK policing focuses on measuring volume and serious crime in a way that has led to the prioritisation of law enforcement and maintenance of a crime control mindset across the police organisation and poses a problem for the delivery of community engagement work (Barnes and Eagle, 2007; Loftus, 2010). At the start of their action research project to improve community engagement in 4 NPTs, Foster and Jones (2010, p.396) described the prevailing culture as 'dominated by narrowly defined

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'performance' measures with daily crime targets and a 'what gets measured gets done' orientation.' Consequently, it reinforced a 'crime-centric approach' that led to community engagement being regarded as 'nice to do but not essential'; something that was reflected in the general lack of police interaction with the public. This shows how the prioritisation of crime control at the organisational level can influence how work is completed in NPTs to the extent that community engagement activity can be side-lined by police officers and staff on patrol. Relatedly, the traditional focus on arrests and detection in police forces' performance measures has made it difficult for them to assess the performance and effectiveness of community engagement activity (Simmonds, 2015). While some research has started to identify how police performance can be measured in new ways, such as the Police-Community Interaction Survey (Rosenbaum et al. 2017), there remains a focus on continuing to understand and assess the police-public interaction through forms of measurement, including structured surveys and randomised sampling, that are incompatible with many aspects of engagement activity (Fielding and Innes, 2006). This has led scholars to repeatedly argue for qualitative alternatives that are meaningful to both citizens and officers (Fielding and Innes, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2010). The precedence given to crime control work in NPTs is further reflected in research exploring PCSOs where assessments of their work activities show how in the organisation the role has become more focused on and valued as providing a resource to crime control.

Examinations of the role and practices of PCSOs have identified how their core tasks have expanded over time with community engagement becoming a less central part of their work. Early research showed the auxiliaries to be engaging in a range of activities, from spending time in public on patrol, intelligence gathering and dealing with low-level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour to compiling police reports and conducting enquiries (Cooper et al. 2006; Crawford et al. 2005; Paskell, 2007). The fragmentation of their work between community-oriented and crime-focused tasks highlighted how the role had become 'wider and more complex than a straightforward patrol function' (Long, Robinson and Senior, 2006, p.7). This was emphasised in evaluations showing how the different types of activities completed by PCSOs could be organised in different ways to make sense of how the role was

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being performed and how it should be developed. Crawford et al. (2005, p.59) identified two models, the 'junior police officer' and the 'dedicated patrol officer', that separated the different tasks and expectations of PCSOs. The former model captured PCSOs acting as a supplementary policing resource to free-up police officers from 'time consuming, minor and less serious tasks', including attending minor criminal incidents, completing focused investigations and interviews, guarding crime scenes and traffic duties. The latter model focused PCSOs entirely on providing reassurance through visible patrol to enable them to be accessible and familiar to the public and knowledgeable about localities. Using findings from their evaluation of 6 police divisions in West Yorkshire, Long, Robinson and Senior (2006, p.38) expanded on Crawford et al.'s (2005) classifications by adding a third 'community engagement' model to take account of the networking, liaison, advocacy, mediation and support activities PCSOs were also involved in. Long, Robinson and Senior (2006) considered that aspects of all three models were to varying degrees evident in PCSOs' workload. The researchers proposed that the PCSOs' main responsibilities, summarised as 'supporting policing', 'community engagement' and 'patrol', should be understood as distinct parts of their practice and allocated equal amounts of time to complete. In comparison, Crawford et al. (2005) considered the different responsibilities of PCSOs as potential supplementary functions to patrol.

The different academic understandings of the PCSO role not only highlight how community engagement is considered less of an overarching function, but it can be structured as a distinct part of their work tacked onto or delivered separately from patrol. It shows how the auxiliaries will not necessarily consider engagement in their patrol practice in the way depicted in policing policy. This repositioning of community engagement in PCSO practice can be linked to a number of organisational responses to the role that are highlighted in research. Firstly, the cultural leaning towards crime control in policing is reflected in how PCSOs' work is assessed. O'Neill (2014a) identified that PCSOs who received the most praise and appreciation for their work efforts were those who supplied intelligence that supported police investigations and arrests. In contrast, PCSOs proficient in community engagement work, particularly those demonstrating success in developing social capital, did not receive the same

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recognition for their endeavours. The lack of praise for community engagement achievements inspired an 'enforcement mind frame' in PCSOs, some of whom were always partly on the lookout for enforcement work to assist PCs (O'Neill, 2014a, p.28). Secondly, the deployment of PCSOs regularly revolves around them supporting the work of PCs. Studies have identified how PCSOs are often abstracted to other responsive policing activities, which both removed the auxiliaries from opportunities to engage with the public and undermined the original purpose of their role (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; O'Neill, 2014a). Thirdly, the lack of opportunity for progression within the PCSO role and the advertisement of the role as an opportunity to gain foundational policing experience has made it more difficult to retain PCSOs to deliver a consistent community engagement function in localities (Cooper et al. 2006; Loveday and Smith, 2015).

The way the PCSO role has become structured by police forces, as the aforementioned findings indicate, questions the police organisation's commitment to both PCSOs and community engagement in policing (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015). This set of circumstances can be seen to have been exacerbated by the policy of financial austerity initiated by the coalition government in 2010. The prioritisation of making financial savings across the police organisation has disproportionately impacted NPTs and resulted in fewer PCSOs (Unison, 2016). The risk is not only to the continuance of PCSOs, as demonstrated by the recent actions of Norfolk Police (BBC News, 2017; Guardian, 2017), but to the gradual overhaul of the functions originally assigned to the role. Reviewing the changes to PCSO workloads since the spending cuts, Unison (2016) concluded that the auxiliaries are now less visible within communities, deployed to cover the work of police officers and allocated tasks that other agencies are no longer resourced to carry out. The resulting shift away from community engagement further encourages the auxiliaries to evidence their worth in relation to crime control (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015).

The confusion and crossover between crime control and community engagement in PCSOs' work is complicated by their policing powers. Despite PCSOs being introduced to complement the work of police officers by providing a visible, accessible and

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familiar presence to engage communities, Merritt (2009) contends that the legislative provisions establishing the police staff role confused the extent to which it is community oriented. The auxiliaries are tasked with a community support function, but they are assigned some constabulary powers and identified alongside a number of the same occupational standards as PCs, which sets up the execution of their role as that of a 'junior ranking police officer' (Merritt, 2009). This has been further obscured by calls to review and extend PCSO powers to reduce the demands on police officers (see for example: The Home Office (2004a, p.10) White Paper *Policing: Modernising Police Powers to Meet Community Needs*). The 'crisis of identity' created in the implementation of the role in the practice context is exacerbated by the designation of specific PCSO powers being at the discretion of Chief Constables (Merritt, 2009, p.385). HMIC (2004) pinpointed variation nationally in the powers appointed to PCSOs with some police forces creating 'different types' of auxiliary through the allocation of powers. The inconsistency between the type of powers assigned to PCSOs across different police force areas, including periodic changes to the powers issued to the auxiliaries within constabularies, has created confusion for PCSOs about the extent and use of their powers (O'Neill, 2014a).

The tension in the legislative regulations for PCSOs is revealed in research exploring their perceptions and experiences of the practice context where grounds to extend PCSO powers are presented. Cooper et al. (2006) remarked that a large majority of PCSOs who participated in their evaluation had reported suffering some type of physical violence and most had experienced verbal abuse. Similarly, Pamment (2009) presented recorded data showing assaults on the auxiliaries to have trebled between 2004 and 2006 to emphasise the seriousness and extent of the risk posed to police staff. The research highlighted that PCSOs lack of status supported by their limited policing powers exacerbated their vulnerability, particularly in the presence of young people, and assigning the auxiliaries additional powers, equipment and training to increase their protection and deterrence value could make them more effective. Accompanying the concern for PCSOs' safety, it was also pointed out that they had insufficient powers to deal with the crimes and low-level disorder they regularly encountered. In Paskell's (2007) interviews, PCSOs described their limited

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enforcement powers as constraining their capacity to deal with crime and disorder in progress. This often made them ineffective at dealing with the problems they were tasked with addressing, specifically managing youth disorder. Explaining this practice issue, Pamment (2009) pointed out that young peoples' understandings of PCSOs' enforcement limitations contributed to them intentionally exhibiting non-compliance and hostility towards the auxiliaries. Merritt (2010) concluded that a clear tension existed between the original aim that PCSOs perform 'non-confrontational' duties in public and their lived reality of dealing with low-level crime and disorder which can place the auxiliaries at risk, make their work more challenging and weaken their status in public. In line with this reasoning, a vast number of PCSOs questioned in studies have expressed their preference for greater policing powers (see for example: Long, Robinson and Senior, 2006; Paskell, 2007; and O'Neill, 2014a). At the same time, the demand for more policing powers has prompted challenge on the basis that such a move undermines the core responsibility of PCSOs to support the community (Johnston, 2005).

In view of PCSOs being introduced to promote reassurance and develop community engagement in local policing, O'Neill (2014b) contended that the case for assessing PCSO powers incorrectly compares the police staff to their police officer counterparts when the two roles have different purposes. Instead of establishing another type of enforcement officer, PCSOs were allocated limited powers to be executed in specific circumstances to reflect the non-confrontational focus of their remit (ACPO, 2007). Consequently, the PCSO role should promote a way of working and skillset that does not utilise or depend on formal and coercive powers (O'Neill, 2014b). Indeed, O'Neill (2014a) identified how PCSOs had tailored their practice to overcome their limited enforcement capacity by developing adept interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to persuade, stay calm, distract and use their knowledge of a person to negotiate challenging behaviours and control situations. Accordingly, PCSOs having few powers is recognised as benefitting their role by not only improving their ability to engage with local residents and organisations but familiarise themselves with and approach young people (Cooper et al. 2006; Paskell, 2007).

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The communicative success of PCSOs to compensate for their enforcement limitations is considered to be at risk if their powers are extended. Crawford et al. (2005, p.42) argued that any broadening of PCSO powers has the potential to create 'adversarial relations' between PCSOs and the public, reducing their recourse to using persuasion and negotiation to encourage compliance, damaging their ability to engage with people, and leading to a more enforcement-orientated role. By the same token, Long, Robinson and Senior (2006) warned that any changes to PCSO powers might undermine their high visibility and reassurance potential and obstruct their development of a communication skillset. The authors highlighted that these are valuable aspects of their role that both give rise to their capacity to be accessible and engage with the community and make them distinct from police officers. O'Neill (2014b, p.270) concluded that the credibility PCSOs have established as 'formal social control agent[s]' capable of building a great deal of trust and social capital within communities is likely to be compromised by extending the legal powers available to them.

The academic debate around PCSO practice highlights how organisational influences can prioritise and reward crime control work to the degree that community engagement, particularly in relation to patrol, has become considered a less essential part of the auxiliaries' work which challenges the policy narrative. Cosgrove and Ramshaw (2015), in a comparative review of their individual ethnographic studies of local policing, summarised this mixed picture of community engagement in PCSO practice. The authors pointed out that methods of informal and formal engagement existed, including PCSOs attending resident meetings and establishing and maintaining familiarity with local people and organisations, and this extended to developing contact with disillusioned or minority groups. However, the degree to which PCSOs were committed to and able to deliver engagement, particularly in light of their 'legitimacy deficit' and experiencing barriers from some communities, was dependent upon the role orientations of individual auxiliaries and their possession of communication and 'craft skills' to develop relationships (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015, p.86). Moreover, the occupational motivation of PCSOs to deliver community engagement was influenced by, and often side-lined in favour of, the prioritisation of

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crime control work in NPTs where the auxiliaries were largely viewed as an additional resource to deter crime, gather intelligence, identify suspects and address low level crime and disorder. Consequently, engagement often took the form of 'a complementary outcome of crime control activity' as opposed to being harnessed as a primary function in their work (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015, p.88).

In the preceding examination, the shift towards crime control in PCSO practice also brings to light how the communicative skills of PCSOs, which are described as a distinctive and important part of their community engagement work, are not fully explored, especially in terms of patrol. PCSOs being stretched across two divergent functions, as O'Neill (2014a, p.7) explains, has resulted in a lack of understanding about 'community engagement and trust-building work' for some police officers and staff. Studies show that PCSOs do not always know how to appropriately deliver this type of work and police officers can overlook the importance of PCSOs management of their relations with the public (Crawford et al. 2005; O'Neill, 2014a). It is insufficient to assume that placing police officers and staff on patrol in the community will naturally bring about engagement with the public (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015). In a similar way, this is reflected in the literature around Reassurance Policing which shows that the presence of police officers and staff does not automatically signify safety and protection for all persons (Barker, 2014; Innes, 2014). In a qualitative investigation of the experiences and perceptions of residents encountering reassurance policing strategies, Barker (2014) discovered that police patrols can be ambivalently interpreted. Some residents derived reassurance from police visibility while others perceived it as a reminder of potential risks and threats around them. Similarly, Innes (2014) referred to findings from the evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme to highlight how in some instances the sight of officers conveyed the message that there were a lot of problems in an area or communicated a sense of emergency.

The potential for some people to sense insecurity is also related to a police presence signifying danger and alarm and causing feelings of distress, fear and suspicion, particularly for members of minority groups who are more likely to have experienced

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discriminatory and oppressive policing practices in the public space (StopWatch, 2020). Public interpretation of a police presence, as Innes (2014) goes on to explain, is not straightforward and incorporates a multitude of other experiences, perceptions and judgements about safety triggering positive and negative reactions capable of enhancing or undermining perceptions of policing. Combining these insights with the literature on procedural justice which shows that police contact with the public 'matters' and can be influential in perceptions of community engagement, it is evident that the police knowing what to do on patrol to appropriately engage with the public is a significant part of their work that requires attention (Bradford, Jackson and Stanko, 2009; Merry et al. 2012). This is reinforced by research highlighting that the police do not actively engage with all publics they come into contact with.

A study involving systematic observations of police officers in two US states to understand how they spent their time with the community found that those who were community policing specialists chose contacts with citizens who were less likely to be victims, complainants, involved in disputes or crises, or viewed as 'wrongdoers'. Instead, these officers were more likely to have contact with persons known to them that were often positioned in local businesses and organisations. The researchers concluded that officers who were given the opportunity to engage in face-to-face contact with citizens showed a bias towards encountering those that did not require any immediate intervention and were perceived as more agreeable to 'mingle' with. Skogan's (1994) evaluation of a Community Policing programme in Houston also showed that the police when acting on their own initiative focused their efforts in areas where they were well received. This resulted in the police only representing the views and addressing the needs of white residents owning single-family homes. Making similar observations in a UK Community Policing context, Ramshaw (2012) identified that police officers who valued foot patrol and maintained links with local groups and organisations engaged with 'respectable contacts'. These officers made a distinction between those 'deserving' and 'undeserving' of their attention and support which led them to miss opportunities to develop contact with non-conforming persons who were suspicious, distrustful and resentful of the police. The

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research emphasised that in addition to the need for attitudinal and behavioural change the police organisation should encourage police officers to foster ways of learning about and making contact with diverse groups that make up local communities (Ramshaw, 2012).

The lack of evaluation by the police organisation of the mechanisms adopted to develop contact with different sections of the community was also highlighted by Jones and Newburn (2001) in their examination of UK policing community consultation initiatives. Using telephone surveys with all police forces and in-depth interviews with police officers and local people in 5 police force areas, the researchers pinpointed a number of limitations of formal consultation, including it not always suiting the needs of different community groups and often being unrepresentative of the wider population. The research revealed the importance of formal consultation not replacing policing practices, like foot patrol, where police officers can develop sustained and consistent informal consultation and relationships at the ground level with members of the public. Together these studies show how police officers and staff will not always engage with all the persons they come into contact with, both formally and informally, including on patrol. Furthermore, it highlights the need for the police organisation to develop the skills and practices of officers to seek contact with a broader cross-section of persons and groups in local communities and avoid only engaging with those that they feel comfortable with and uphold their interests (Barnes and Eagle, 2007; Bobov, 1999; Myhill, 2012).

The police organisation is criticised for prioritising the evaluation of police tactics and strategies over exploring the 'craft of policing' and making use of a police officer perspective in considerations of learning and development, which neglects a fuller understanding of frontline police patrol work (Ramshaw, 2012; Willis and Mastrofski, 2018). This is apparent in the use of evaluative and experimental research findings to inform the 'engaging communities' Neighbourhood Policing guideline and the supplementary advice and resources that accompany it (see College of Policing, 2012; 2013; 2018b; Colover and Quinton, 2018). In terms of patrol, the research referenced highlights that targeted foot patrol when implemented alongside community

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engagement and problem-solving activity can reduce crime, increase public reassurance and enhance perceptions of the police (Colsover and Quinton, 2018). It also recommends ways police officers and staff can maximise their visibility, including targeting patrols in places where there are hot spots of crime, low public confidence or high footfalls of people, and using foot patrol to have informal conversations, develop networks, gather community intelligence and find out about local problems (College of Policing, 2018b). While these evidence-based practice summaries offer suggestions around where police officers and staff can position themselves on patrol and identify the overarching tasks that can optimise their visibility, they lack any specificity about what police officers and staff need to do to be able to complete these tasks and engage with people on patrol. This is particularly pertinent given the significance of the communicative function of patrol identified in Community Policing research.

Posick and Hatfield (2017) show through their application of the H.E.A.R.T medical model (Hear, Empathise, Apologise, Respond and Thank) to police-community interactions that communication is an important element of the contact the police have with the public. Similarly, PCSOs surveyed in Crawford et al.'s (2005) research identified communication and people skills to be some of their most important work attributes. Merging these insights, Hail, Aston and O'Neill (2018, p.17) in a systematic review of policing research aimed at understanding the effect of different methods of visible policing on public confidence identified that 'officers should be encouraged to, and rewarded for, adopting methods which prioritise face-to-face interactions conducted with empathy and fairness' to engage citizens. Nonetheless, the process of interaction, as Willis and Mastrofski (2018) reveal from in-depth interviews with patrol officers in the US, is an aspect of practice that police officers find challenging. Therefore, to access and develop this area of police 'craft', particularly in relation to patrol work, scholars argue that the use of qualitative enquiry is pivotal.

Wood et al. (2014, p.364) incorporated ethnography into their foot patrol experiment in Philadelphia to understand the 'normative, cultural and pragmatic complexities' involved in officers' negotiation of their role in foot beat areas. Through

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observations the researchers discovered that foot patrol officers valued both the extensive knowledge they gained on foot patrol and its influence on behaviours and fostering positive community relations. The study emphasised the worth of using qualitative research alongside experimental designs and seeking officer knowledge in the implementation of policing interventions. Yet, there is a lack of research exploring what police officers and staff do on foot patrol from a qualitative perspective (Hail, Aston and O'Neill, 2018; Ramshaw, 2012). This position is aptly summarised by Ramshaw (2012, p.230) who argues, 'a fuller appreciation of what the police officer does on patrol, how and why, is invaluable for the development of future localized policing models. Hence the need for further ethnographies of the front line to develop a more fluid and sophisticated analysis of patrol work.' The next section will show how this lack of insight also extends to how police officers and staff make sense of the communities they are expected to engage on patrol.

Communities are Identifiable to Police Officers and Staff on Patrol

In the most recent articulations of UK Community Policing programmes, police officers and staff are tasked inter alia with providing a visible, accessible and familiar presence in communities that are mapped out according to geographic boundaries. In this way, the presentation and structure of patrol connects with a 'euphemistic rhetoric' of community and policing (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994, p.11). It assumes that police patrol can be readily inserted into predefined functional communities, or as Stacey (1969, p.135) describes, ideal typical communities where a sense of belonging is associated with the social relations embedded within a particular area. The resulting depiction can be seen to be rooted in a romanticised view of community and police-public relations which believes the police and public are close; communities are unchanging and comprise collective value systems; and sharing these values the police can work to benefit and fulfil the interests of all (Fielding, 2009, p.2-3). This kind of community is symbolised by the fictional character of PC George Dixon – the friendly, well-known and ever-present local bobby on the beat

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and evokes a 'golden age of policing' that the public find reassuring (Fielding, 2009; Reiner, 2000, p.36).

Regardless of whether such an idealised community or relationship with the police ever existed, it remains prominent in repeated public demands for more police on the streets and in the populist rhetoric underpinning police visibility in policing policy reforms (Fielding, 2009; Manning, 1984; McLaughlin, 2007). However, 'appeals to community' in policy, as Evans (1997, p.35) summarises, are 'inadequately explored, theorised or evaluated', and this is particularly relevant to policing policies where the romantic image of community is unrealistic for delivering Community Policing in the 21st century (Fielding, 2009). Building on these ideas, this section will firstly set out the romanticised articulation of community and policing in policy before critiquing the theories that have influenced it to show its incompatibility with contemporary understandings. This will be further evidenced by presenting scholarly suggestions on how the police can redefine the way in which they approach working with communities, including online communities. Together these academic discussions around community and policing will challenge the policy assumption and highlight the lack of insight around how the police negotiate the complexities of modern communities to deliver an engagement function on patrol.

Community, especially within the field of criminology, lacks a clear definition, partly due to a sense that 'we all know a community when we see one' (Wilcox, Cullen and Feldmeyer, 2018, p.2). The conceptual ambiguity of community has allowed policymakers to adapt the term to invoke specific ideas and imagery (Crawford, 1999), and in Community Policing this has taken the form of 'a politics of nostalgia' that captures populist themes of yearning for the virtuous communal associations of an imagined past and a personalisation of service (Manning, 1984, p.205). These imaginings are created from feelings, emotions, vocabularies, imagery and associations that are bound up in peoples' sense of place and take the form of narratives about 'personal biography, community career, and perceptions of national change and decline' (Girling, Loader and Sparks, 2000, p.170). Regardless of how transferable these conceptions are to the present-day social context, they continue

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to be prominent in public and political discourse, particularly in public perceptions of crime and disorder and confidence in policing (Jackson and Bradford, 2009; McLaughlin, 2007). It has resulted in a romantic narrative of community and policing. Community is distinguished spatially as local, encompassing face-to-face interactions and 'qualities of social stability and togetherness, shared lives and values' (Joseph, 2002; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003, p.79). Policing is characterised by the local bobby-on-the-beat, most commonly re-imagined in the mature, physically imposing, well-known and accepted authority figure of a patrolling police officer that exhibits a demeanour that is simultaneously 'avuncular, friendly, and benign and awesome, frightening, and intimidating' (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003, p.73 and p.82).

The emblematic imagery of a united geographic community policed by a local bobby on foot patrol, however authentic, is one that has retained political and public traction in the delivery of policing⁶ and feeds into the dedicated foot patrol model advocated in Community Policing policies (Fielding, 2009). It is this idealised sentiment that exacerbates the very condition it seeks to resolve by presenting a basic structure of communal life that speaks to similarity over diversity and attributes sameness with unity (Bauman, 2001; Delanty, 2003). The result is a style of community that implicates the police in 'hegemonic national histories and dominant renditions of national identity in ways that expressly or implicitly denigrate or misrecognise minority populations' (Loader, 2006, p.211). Accordingly, it is incompatible with the heterogeneity and dynamism of modern life and overlooks the challenges, differences and conflicts that both exist in communal living and serve an important role in the processes of collective action (Brent, 1997; Delanty, 2003). Reviewing the theoretical influences on the policing policy discourse highlights how this romantic image of community and policing in the presentation of police visibility has been reinforced.

⁶ Public demand for more police visibility in the form of bobbies on the beat is recurrently portrayed in the media (see for example: BBC, 2016; Hymas, 2019; Telegraph Reporters, 2017).

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Strands of communitarian thought, particularly the work of Robert Putnam (1993, 2000) and Amitai Etzioni (1993, 1995, 1998), became influential in thinking about citizens and communities, and their relationship with the delivery of public services, including policing (Bullock, 2014; Hoggett, 1997). Putnam (1993, 2000) introduced the notion of social capital to understandings of community by arguing that strong participative networks, trust and solidarity between citizens created reciprocal and productive relationships both among them and with the state administration. Extending his work to an American context, Putnam (2000) argued that modern society was in a state of degeneration and required greater collective engagement in societal institutions, in the form of reviving social connections, developing unity and strengthening trust, to build social capital and facilitate mutually beneficial outcomes. Similarly, Etzioni (1993, 1995, 1998) argued that communities had been weakened by public institutions assuming social tasks and enforcing responsibilities otherwise exercisable at local level resulting in a culture of self-interest and a lack of social responsibility. Etzioni advocated the formation of 'responsive communities' composed of shared expectations and values imparted through education and maintained through mutual praise and disapproval to support citizens in appreciating their moral commitments; acknowledging their social responsibilities and rights; and developing the skills to self-govern. These arguments challenged the individualistic principles of neo-liberal political philosophy by showing that there exist obligations and commitments not bound by market forces, such as family, and the self is attached to and partly constructed by communal commitments and values which are not matters of choice (Buchanan, 1989). Instead, community could be thought of as a form of collective citizenship involving shared values, norms and bonds that can act as a resource for harnessing 'active practices of self-management and identity construction' to deliver the common good (Delanty 2003; Giddens, 1999; Rose, 1999, p.176).

The type of communitarian community described by Putnam and Etzioni was transferable to Community Policing strategies, police-citizen partnership work and neighbourhood watch, because it demonstrated how police officers could foster local support and accountability at the same time as working with citizens to improve the

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quality of life in their neighbourhoods and reduce their reliance on the police service (Etzioni, 1998; Giddens, 1999). It offered an approach to criminal justice that allowed the government to demonstrate a sustained commitment to crime and disorder, but with less of the burden of accounting for its effectiveness as the onus was placed on citizens (Crawford, 1999). These ideas around the nature and role of community translated into a re-branding of crime prevention as the 'task of the whole community' (Home Office, 1984, p.1) with the language in the policy discourse, particularly in the dialogue associated with the active citizenship and civil renewal agenda, creating the vision of one community, local and face-to-face (Millner, 2008). However, the community envisaged by Etzioni and Putnam, and captured in government policy, is criticised for embellishing an archaic image of social life that is irreconcilable with the contemporary world (Delanty, 2003).

Communities, unlike the kind advocated in communitarian thought, are not neatly packaged homogenous and self-reliant units of people capable of mobilising in harmony (Delanty, 2003). This one-dimensional perspective can be seen to tie in with early sociological ideas of communities formed around kinship associations, known as *gemeinschaft* (Tonnies and Loomis, 1955), or the 'mechanical solidarity' between people from sharing formal and informal pursuits (Durkheim, 1964). These usages categorise community in terms of social relations in a defined geographic space or a sense of belonging to a group (Stacey, 1969, p.135), and emphasise how it can be an aspect of social understanding important to making sense of human organisation and a feeling of untainted goodness desirable to most (Crow and Allan, 1994; Bauman, 2001). However, writers exploring the modern politics of sexuality, gender, ethnicity and class have highlighted in different ways, what Rutherford (1990, p.24) captures in an essay titled *A Place Called Home*, 'the multiplicity of subject positions and potential identities' invariably unbounded on which we establish and attempt to construct a sense of self. Consequently, these works draw attention to the multiplicity, fluidity and complexity involved in making sense of communities in modern life. In contrast to earlier understandings, they show how communities can exist in a countless number of potentially overlapping and everchanging forms based

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on the individualities that people actively, passively or unwillingly identify with or are identified by (Hoggett, 1997).

A person may be simultaneously affiliated with a local, familial, organisational, sectoral, cultural, ethnic or religious community, each of which may symbolise different values and involve opposing activities highlighting the conflict of interests that can exist (Crawford, 1999). At the same time, communities can be founded on more abstract conceptions of self, such as morals, values, attitudes and beliefs (Johnson, 2000). These contemporary insights challenge the idea of 'one' objective community that police officers and staff can engage with on patrol, and pinpoint the different, subjective and uncomplimentary communities that may exist within the spaces they traverse. Furthermore, given the personal nature of many of the communities that individuals can identify with, it becomes apparent that most will be unnoticeable to patrolling police officers and staff. The plurality and diversity of communities makes it difficult for the police to define and respond to communities (Johnson, 2000), and highlights the significance of tailoring policing to communities' needs and preferences – 'there is no one formula for all communities [...]' (Wycoff, 2004, p.22). Accordingly, it challenges the place-based approach to Neighbourhood Policing by questioning the extent to which geographic boundaries are constructive markers for police officers and staff to delineate communities to engage with on patrol.

A geographic focus to policing, specifically the notion of the neighbourhood, took shape through theories, labelled the 'criminologies of everyday life', that emphasised how daily routines, communal structures, situational factors and physical spaces within localities could influence and prevent crime and disorder (Garland, 2001). Three theories, in particular, have been identified as influential in policy considerations of crime prevention in communities (Crawford, 1999). Firstly, Oscar Newman (1973) created the 'defensible space' model for urban housing to overcome physical design flaws that made residents vulnerable to, and prevented 'collective community action' against, crime and disorder. Defensible spaces, characterised by 'real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved

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opportunities for surveillance', were advocated to facilitate processes of informal social control between residents to better manage their living environment and prevent crime (Newman, 1973, p.3). Secondly, George Kelling and James Wilson (1982) devised the 'broken windows' thesis to explain how incivilities and signs of social decay can breakdown informal neighbourhood controls inviting disorderly conduct and creating the conditions for crime to flourish. They argued that police use of 'order maintenance' techniques, shaped by neighbourhood standards, including increased visibility through foot patrol, can promote public order by strengthening informal social control and counteracting neighbourhood decline to prevent disorder and crime, in other words fix 'broken windows'. Thirdly, a group of researchers, including Ron Clarke and Patricia Mayhew, explored how the material circumstances of a place could assist a capable offender in securing rewards with limited risk to illustrate the opportunistic nature of crime (Hough, Clarke and Mayhew, 1980). They advocated opportunity reducing measures and situational crime prevention techniques that designed out crime by increasing the effort (e.g., making targets harder to access); adding risks (e.g., natural and formal methods of surveillance); and reducing the reward (e.g., removing the target) (Clarke, 1997, p.4; Clarke cited in Hughes, 1998).

In the UK, the situational and social approaches to crime prevention have been classified under the umbrella of 'community safety' and 'associated with neighbourhood-based solutions, partnership working and participatory frameworks' to emphasise the importance of combining knowledge and expertise of both residents and frontline practitioners experiencing and dealing with neighbourhood problems on a daily basis (Crawford and Evans, 2017, p.805). The emphasis on the role of informal social control in generating and maintaining safety in localities has raised the profile of community and identified it as a site for accessing and organising people to take preventative steps to control crime (Crawford, 1999). However, the heavy focus upon geography within the criminologies of everyday life while broadening understandings of crime beyond the dispositional bias in criminological research is identified as having a number of limitations for policing and crime prevention (Crawford and Evans, 2017).

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Firstly, comprehending communities in terms of place limits the definition and exploration of social relations and their links to delinquency (Kornhauser, 1978). This can be evidenced in policing policy where 'more community' is believed to result in 'less crime' (Crawford, 1999 p.300), however research shows that strong communities characterised by high levels of informal social control (i.e., dense private ties) does not necessarily correlate with lower rates of crime (Wilcox, Cullen and Feldmeyer, 2018). For example, Foster's (1995, p.580) ethnographic research of a London housing estate with higher-than-average levels of crime identified that the presence of informal social control created a situation where crime was to a large extent being 'contained'. The limitations of understanding communities and crime in terms of strong interpersonal ties is further highlighted by collective efficacy theory which shows how social cohesion from working trust and shared expectations in neighbourhoods combined with residents' willingness to intervene for the 'common good' is linked to low rates of crime (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997; Sampson, 2002).

Secondly, the spatial dimension to crime prevention practices can impose arbitrary boundaries around people residing in the same vicinity. The result is the creation of lots of communities of 'insiders' defending themselves against the potential criminal threat from 'outsiders' fuelling distrust and hostility (Crawford, 1999). This can be seen to draw parallels with critiques of broken windows theory which led to a 'zero-tolerance' policing approach (see Wilcox, Cullen and Feldmeyer, 2018). Zero-tolerance policing, specifically in the city of New York, involved aggressive and punitive tactics largely against groups and individuals who exhibited worrying or troubling tendencies (the outsiders) in places based on the moral classification of the established order (the insiders) resulting in human rights violations (Innes, 1999). Equally the geographic boundaries residents can impose to delineate their community can differ from and be more constricting than formal neighbourhood borders. In their study of local policing, Shapland and Vagg (1987) found that residents' perceptions of and responses to problems were extremely localised to the extent that they considered the street too large a unit to take responsibility for.

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Thirdly, it is mistaken to suppose that everyone and everything is inter-connected within a small locality (Stacey, 1969), especially in contemporary geographic communities where people have weaker and fewer associations to places due to the increased freedom to move around and occupy many different spaces (Bullock, 2014). Indeed, Trojanowicz and Moore (1988, p.5 cited in Fielding, 2005, p.466) argue that the global scale of transit, communications and media has 'widened the rift between a sense of community based on geography and one based on a community of interest' highlighting how contemporary society is more structured towards ties of association.

The use of community in policing policy discourse, using the words of Hillery (1963, p.779), 'embraces a motley assortment of concepts and qualitatively different phenomena', and attempts to reduce them to a nostalgic notion of one homogenous, place-based and co-ordinated community. This dreamy and attractive perspective fails to grasp the inherent limits both internally within the structures of communities and externally in organising communities in the modern political economy (DeFilippis, Fisher and Shragge, 2010). The filtered political understanding of community neglects consideration of the wider forces and processes at work, the provision of assets beyond the local context and the interplay of power relations at the core of community organising (DeFilippis, Fisher and Shragge, 2010). Consequently, the stripped-down version of community presented in policing policy challenges the extent to which police officers and staff can deliver community engagement work (Bullock, 2014). More specifically, it raises questions about how police officers and staff on patrol can provide a visible, accessible and familiar presence to all the multiple communities that may live in a neighbourhood, including the 'hard to reach' and other minority and marginalised populations (Millie, 2014). This is highlighted in Vernon and Lasley's (1992) research where they struggled to demarcate the community according to traditional markings, such as interpersonal experiences, in the geographical area they planned to study resulting in the researchers installing physical boundaries around the place to identify participants.

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Even when a minority community is more identifiable to the police, as Bullock and Johnson (2017) show in their qualitative study of police engagement with Muslim citizens and communities, a number of multifaceted challenges stemming from within and beyond the police organisation need to be understood and resolved for engagement to succeed. These can include, as the last section highlighted, policing practices that generate suspicion and mistrust, the legacy of allegations of racism in policing and previous unsatisfactory policing responses that have led to disengagement. There is acknowledgement in the policy literature that the police should adopt a flexible approach to community engagement to take account of the needs and preferences of communities, including citizens' affinity with 'communities of interest' as opposed to geographical neighbourhoods (Colover and Quinton, 2018; Myhill, 2012, p.81). However, what this looks like in practice is not explored in any depth in policy and it neglects a finer examination of the individualities of different citizens and communities and the engagement strategies that can effectively support police officers and staff, particularly on patrol, in this area of work (Barnes and Eagle, 2007; Bullock and Johnson, 2017).

Academics have highlighted the importance of the police building knowledge about the key issues that concern different communities (Bullock and Johnson, 2017) and gaining this awareness 'from people in a position to know' (Fielding, 2009, p.3), including those that are already part of existing community groups and organisations (Barnes and Eagle, 2007). However, trying to reach a broader cross section of communities and involve a diversity of groups in policing, as Fielding (2005, p.467) argues, requires the police to acknowledge that they cannot reflect 'the face of the community' and to increase their tolerance towards the differences in civil order between locales. Equally, underpinning all of these proposed approaches to community engagement is a fundamental need for the police to possess the 'interactional skills' that can break down barriers with different citizens and groups to make engagement possible (Bullock and Johnson, 2017, p.17). In addition to exploring how the police can physically develop their approach to identifying and accessing different citizens and communities in neighbourhoods, there is an

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increasing academic focus on how the police engage virtually with online communities.

The growth of social media has led to its promotion in policing as a tool that can be utilised to forge links with citizens, foster two-way dialogue and involve more people and groups in policing (Bullock, 2018). Accordingly, research has started to consider how the police use social media to communicate with citizens and communities, and the extent to which it facilitates engagement (Brainard and McNutt, 2010; Bullock, 2018; Crump, 2011; Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer, 2015; Lieberman, Koetzle and Sakiyama, 2013). Nevertheless, the academic shift in focus to police-citizen engagement via online platforms neglects a more detailed insight into how police officers and staff presently navigate the complexities of understanding and engaging contemporary communities when they are conducting a patrol function. The need to continue to think about and develop this physical aspect of community engagement is reinforced by research showing that policing, specifically in the UK, remains a 'low technology occupation' and police use of social media has not transformed police-citizen communication in the way envisaged (Bullock, 2018, p.255).

Summary and Research Questions

Reviewing the policy assumptions using the policing literature, the preceding sections have detailed how police visibility in community engagement work is more complex than a police presence providing a service that is responsive to the community. The research evidence highlighted that all citizens will not willingly and capably engage with police officers and staff on patrol; that all police officers and staff will not routinely be directed to, want to or know how to provide an engagement function on patrol; and that communities are not standardised social units visible and accessible to patrolling police officers and staff. The studies problematised the policy assumptions in three ways. Firstly, research showed how individual, neighbourhood and structural characteristics impact upon the level of citizen engagement with Community Policing programmes. It then highlighted how

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citizen perception of the type of patrol, the amount and nature of contact with police on patrol, and the approachability of patrolling PCSOs can shape assessments of police visibility and community engagement. Together these findings drew attention to the array of intersecting factors which can influence the extent to which citizens engage with police officers and staff on patrol. Secondly, studies underlined how the occupational police culture is not traditionally aligned with community engagement resulting in a range of working styles that accept and resist this part of Community Policing practice. This was then shown to be exacerbated by the prioritisation of crime control in the organisational structures guiding performance frameworks and the functioning of the PCSO role at the expense of understanding and developing the communicative work involved in patrol. These cultural and organisational influences emphasised the ways in which police officers and staff will not necessarily be motivated, supported or equipped to use patrol to deliver community engagement. Thirdly, research revealed how the diversity, fluidity and complexity of contemporary life is at odds with the united, homogenous and localised community model presented in policing policy. This portrayal of community, underpinned by strands of communitarian and crime prevention theory, was shown to perpetuate a romanticised narrative and construct a place-based approach that is incompatible with police officers and staff delivering an engagement function on patrol.

The review of the literature while critical of policy assumptions, nevertheless also revealed insights about community engagement and police patrol work. In comparison to vehicle patrol, the research showed that foot patrol is more noticeable, perceived more favourably, makes police officers appear more approachable and increases opportunities for interaction. Moreover, when patrol involves the public seeing the police and/or having informal exchanges with them, it can develop familiarity, build police-public relationships and lead to positive assessments of policing and community engagement, especially when the police are perceived as being helpful, understanding and/or communicating information about policing. Similarly, awareness and familiarity of PCSOs through local contact, and the perceived approachability and manner of the auxiliaries can be influential in public assessments of and engagement with them. Studies highlighted that there is an

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important communicative function to police visibility, particularly for PCSOs, but more learning and development in this area is required in policing. It showed that police officers and staff do not always know what they need to do on patrol to engage with many different publics, which is aggravated by an organisational preference for evaluating police tactics and strategies over qualitative inquiry into the knowledge and experiences of police officers and staff in patrol work. The research also emphasised the challenges, differences and conflicts involved in making sense of contemporary communities.

Bringing together the policy critique and existing research, it was revealed that there is a lack of qualitative insight into community engagement delivered by police officers and staff on patrol. Citizen engagement was not an explicit focus of the majority of the research and the largely quantitative examination of citizen participation in Community Policing programmes and citizen perception of police officers and staff on patrol made it difficult to draw out a detailed understanding of what citizens experience when they come into contact with patrolling police officers and staff, and how it shapes their engagement with them. Furthermore, a lot of the studies referred to were conducted in an American policing context and in different time periods, which reduced their transferability to understanding present-day Neighbourhood Policing in the UK.

There were more qualitative research insights about the cultural and organisational influences on police officers and staff tasked with community engagement in the UK, however there was little focus on the 'craft' of patrol and exploring how it can be used to provide an engagement function, particularly within the context of PCSOs and Neighbourhood Policing. It was shown as an area of practice that would benefit from more qualitative exploration to understand what police officers and staff do on patrol at the micro-level and develop insights into the communicative dimension to their work. This type of qualitative view offers the opportunity to explore the identified disconnect between the romanticised policy narrative of a placed-based patrol and the reality of engaging citizens and contemporary communities by examining how police officers and staff make sense of and shape the delivery of this

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policy in their everyday work. These identified gaps in knowledge about police visibility in community engagement work delivered by NPTs contributed to the development of the following research questions:

- What is a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs?
- In what ways does police visibility, particularly PCSO visibility, contribute to community engagement?

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Chapter 3

Observing Police Visibility

The literature review in Chapter 2 identified a gap in understanding police visibility in community engagement work from a policing perspective using qualitative research which led to the formulation of two research questions:

- What is a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs?
- In what ways does police visibility, particularly PCSO visibility, contribute to community engagement?

This chapter will set out how an ethnographic approach involving fieldwork in two NPTs in one urban constabulary in the North of England, renamed Wildebay Police, was chosen, planned and experienced to answer the research questions.

A Qualitative View of Patrol

In the most recent policy articulation of police visibility in the Neighbourhood Policing ‘engaging communities’ guidelines, it is presented as being developed from the ‘best available current evidence’ to support police forces in designing and implementing an effective modern Neighbourhood Policing function (College of Policing, 2018a, p.3). This focus on setting standards using the best available evidence reflects the overarching approach of Evidenced Based Policing (EBP) adopted by the College of Policing to inform and challenge their policies, practices and decisions (College of Policing, 2020). It is shaped by the principle that scientific research evidence of ‘what works best’ offers the most effective guide for developing and measuring the impact of policing interventions to avoid inefficient, costly or potentially harmful ways of working (Sherman, 1998a and 2013). However, EBP is criticised for prioritising experimental forms of research to develop policing knowledge at the expense of taking account of the breadth of evidence required for producing deeper insights into the real-life complexity of policing (Punch, 2015). This is discernible in the prevalence

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of experimental and evaluative studies examining police visibility presented in Chapter 2 and reviewed by the College of Policing (2017) to provide the evidence-base for visible patrol. Chapter 2 highlighted how the tendency to use quantitative data collection and analysis methods in studies of police patrol work limited the range of knowledge about the practice at the micro-level from a policing perspective. Furthermore, the need for a qualitative gaze in understandings of police visibility was supported by academics examining patrol practices (Hail, Aston and O'Neill, 2018; Ramshaw, 2012; Wood et al. 2014). In seeking to respond to this identified gap in police patrol research methods, an ethnographic approach was chosen to explore police visibility in community engagement work. This section will set out the specific rationale for choosing a qualitative method before highlighting the reason for adopting an ethnographic lens, the theoretical assumptions underpinning it and personal influences that shaped it.

The decision to adopt a qualitative approach was based on it offering a way of seeing policing practice that cannot be captured by the traditional EBP research methods which have assumed, what Punch (2015) argues is, a distorted superiority in policing research. Reflecting on EBP, Sherman (2013, p.417) reasons that good research evidence derives from scientific methods where reliability and validity can be established and where findings can be assessed using a scale of methodological quality, such as the Scientific Methods Scale which has been used to rank policing and crime prevention practices according to the scientific rigor of the research on which they are based (Sherman and Eck, 2006). While qualitative research is not explicitly discounted, there is a clear preference for experimental research designs that test causal hypotheses, specifically the use of randomised controlled trials, and evaluations of their effectiveness using statistical measurement (Farrington et al. 2006; Punch, 2015). However, scholars are increasingly highlighting a number of drawbacks to the narrow focus of the research methods underpinning EBP and arguing for more diversity in policing research to broaden and strengthen the evidence-base. It is within this argument that a qualitative research method was considered to add value to the evidence-base in a number of ways.

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Firstly, a qualitative perspective can expand the scope of policing knowledge. The experimental research methods informing EBP concentrate on the effectiveness of practices, specifically in relation to crime reduction, which only captures a partial picture of what is relevant (Thacher, 2001). This is evident in the studies reviewed by the College of Policing (2017) to provide an evidence-base for police visibility which are chosen to consider 'the effectiveness of visible patrol.' The result is policing practice, and in this case patrol work, becoming increasingly understood using instrumental knowledge that likens it to a form of treatment to deal with crime control leaving many questions unanswered (Thacher, 2001). The preoccupation with effectiveness of policing practices undermines the countless other, equally important, concerns related to the function of policing and which feed into wider discussions of police accountability, legitimacy, fairness and justice (Bowling, 2006). Policing, as the focus of this PhD research highlights, involves many responsibilities, choices and dilemmas outside of crime control and prevention involving citizens and communities (van Dijk et al. 2015). Therefore, research considerations of police work need to integrate the different and complex dimensions constituting the meaning and practice of policing (van Dijk et al. 2015). Thacher (2001, p.392) summarises this position by stating, 'it is simply not possible to develop legitimate guidelines about what the police should do based only on instrumental knowledge about the effect of police actions on crime.' Accordingly, an expansion of the type and focus of research, specifically using qualitative methods, can embrace the broad range of 'knowledge needs' that exist in policing and allow the police to incorporate 'everything relevant' into their management of the practice context (Fyfe and Wilson, 2012, p.308). This is particularly significant given that police organisations are now situated in an uncertain and risky state of transformation where ongoing shifts in the structure, mandate and accountability mechanisms of the workforce are creating a demand for a 'what matters' focus in research (van Dijk et al. 2015).

Secondly, qualitative research methods can attend to aspects of policing and the practice context that can go unnoticed if only considered from a systematic and experimental perspective. This is raised in the research examining police patrol where academics highlight the need for a qualitative element to understand in more

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detail the realities, nuances and ironies of this type of work from an officer perspective (Wood et al. 2014). Hough (2004) makes a similar observation of the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme where the systematic and focussed nature of the research procedure led to an oversimplification of the research setting and the complexity of the policing task being overlooked. Experimental styles of research are not always suited to examining areas of policing where human subjects, sensitive issues, changeable work environments and the broader social, political and structural conditions that surround the police function are not easily reduced to simple variables or can be divided into a systematic format for measurement (Punch, 2015). It follows that research frameworks need to be more general and adaptable, especially given the breadth of values, actions and activities that embody modern policing, and qualitative research methods can facilitate this (Greene, 2013).

Finally, the strength of validity and reliability in experimental methods informing EBP cannot be straightforwardly assumed, and results should be considered alongside other forms of research evidence, such as that provided by qualitative enquiry. Tilley (2009) outlines that there is no certainty that the samples of participants selected from spatio-temporally specific populations in field tests are representative of all or any given population, and how they interact with treatment interventions will vary and potentially change over time. Similarly, participant compliance with experimental tests is often low resulting in unexamined assumptions being used to make causal inferences (Sampson, 2010). Police officers, not unlike other practitioners, cannot be relied upon to provide accurate data in field tests which can lead to their contribution representing circumstantial evidence of the effectiveness of policing interventions - see for example Bowling (1999) and (Punch, 2015). Even if the internal validity of an experiment is strong, its external validity, specifically when results are translated into policy, can be weak and potentially damaging (Sampson, 2010). An example is the findings from the 'Minneapolis domestic violence experiment' being used to support a policy of mandatory police arrest of domestic violence perpetrators to reduce repeat victimisation, but subsequent studies showing increased victimisation of partners following the arrest of domestic violence perpetrators (Sherman and Berk, 1984; Bowling, 2006). It is therefore important that

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experimental results are considered in synthesis with other types of evidence and not applied to practice in isolation of theory (Tilley, 2009).

The growth of EBP has emphasised the worth of empirical research that tests and evaluates interventions under controlled conditions to inform policy and practice (Sherman, 2013). Yet, while systematic approaches to examining police work are valuable and cost effective, they restrict the production of knowledge to 'what works' and disregard the diversity of knowledge required for policing (Fyfe and Wilson, 2012). Indeed, it is distinctly apparent in the range of methods already being utilised to examine the everyday nature of policing that a qualitative dimension that goes beyond the efficiency and effectiveness of 'what works' is necessary. Examples include but are not limited to historical studies (e.g., Emsley, 1996); interviews (e.g., O'Neill and McCarthy, 2014); comparative studies (e.g., Hinton and Newburn, 2009); and case studies (e.g., Silk, Spalek and O'Rawe, 2013). By introducing different methods and triangulating their findings, the quality of data informing the evidence-base for policing will be improved so as to take account of the complexities within routine police work and move the focus away from the 'one size fits all' model implied in traditional conceptualisations of EBP (Punch, 2015). The need for a qualitative component in policing research is discernible in the area of police patrol where the overwhelming focus, as Chapter 2 highlighted, is on quantitative forms of measurement. Therefore, the decision to use a qualitative research method provided a way to expand the evidence-base and embrace all knowledge requirements for understanding police patrol in community engagement.

An Ethnographic Lens

A qualitative research method not only formed a meaningful way to make a methodological contribution to the study of police patrol, but it was identified as the most appropriate means of exploring the 'what' focus of my research questions. 'What' research questions, as Blaikie (2010, p.60) identifies, concentrate on 'discovering and describing the characteristics of and patterns in some social

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phenomenon.’ The purpose of this research was to seek to describe the visible presence of police officers and staff and its relationship with community engagement. It was important to gain descriptive insights from the social world as perceived and experienced by police officers and staff and therefore, it was my task to uncover and illustrate the ‘insider view’, that is the ‘largely tacit, mutual knowledge, the symbolic meanings, intentions and rules, which provide the orientations’ for the actions of police officers and staff (Blaikie, 2010, p.89). To ascertain this ‘insider view’, I needed a research strategy that enabled me to be part of the social world of police officers and staff and in a position to discover their ways of interpreting and making sense of their actions, others’ actions and the social situations encompassing everyday patrol work (Blaikie, 2010, p.90). An abductive research strategy offered this ‘bottom-up’ approach to generate descriptive insights ‘grounded in the language, meanings and perspectives’ of police officers and staff in the course of carrying out routine patrol (Blaikie, 2010, p.91; Bryman, 2012, p.401).

Ethnography is identified as a method that offers a means of engaging with people in their social world to establish an ‘insider view’ that can facilitate detailed insights into the micro-interactions and nuances that makeup organisational life (Cunliffe, 2010). It is a way to capture understandings that are located within the ‘highly contingent nature of everyday policing and its interactional construction’ (Punch, 2015, p.16), specifically to make sense of the variable communications, interpretations and meanings that exist in this setting (Greene, 2014, p.194). Through the processes of immersion in the lifeworld of social actors and translation of their language, behaviours, interactions, events, rituals and practices, I would be in a position to ‘explore the intricacies, challenges, tensions and choices’ in the functioning of the police organisation (Cunliffe, 2010, p.227). Marks (2004) emphasises the importance of the researcher being involved in the ‘natural setting’ of police work in order to ‘see’ how the culture that informs officers’ decision-making and practice is constructed and experienced over time.

In the field of policing, ethnography is not new. Early seminal studies of policing organisations employed ethnographic approaches to learn about the day-to-day

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reality of policing, namely what the police do and how they do it (Manning, 2014) - see for example, Banton (1964); Bittner (1970); Skolnick (1966); Van Maanen (1973); and Westley (1970). The insights on studying the police in action captured by these early monographs have served to influence academic debate and set the scene for subsequent policing research, including demonstrating the value of ethnography to studying the police (Reiner, 2015). Within the field of British policing, ethnography is an established research method - see for example Cain (1973); Holdaway (1983); Loftus (2009); O'Neill (2005); and Waddington (1999). In an overview of policing ethnography, Manning (2014, p.532-535) describes how the nature of policing dictates the engagement of the researcher with the practice context as it is only in these circumstances that they will have full access to the nuances and complexities that shape the ways officers make sense of, manage and perform their role within the occupational setting. The author draws on a selection of monographs to make three salient points about why ethnography suits studies of policing.

Firstly, by seeing officers' actions, the nature, meaning and impact of behaviours, values, norms, laws and rules, as experienced and perceived by them, is uncovered. In a study of the police on skid-row, Bittner (1967) observed how officers' decision-making is often shaped by tacit knowledge and experience that is not readily noticeable to the outsider. It follows that to be able to understand police work through the 'occupational lens' of officers requires the researcher to be present in the 'here and now' of the practice encounter. Such presence provides the opportunity to 'see' the dynamics of the situation as it unfolds in its raw state and perceive the subtleties of the setting, interaction or task that are often unspoken.

Secondly, the ethnographer has access to the external appearance and internal reality of policing which can be very different occupational experiences for officers. Holdaway (1983), in a covert participant observation of the police, observed officers establishing symbolic boundaries between the public 'front stage' and private 'backstage' areas of the police station. The mapping of public and private territories revealed novel insights about the distinct ways police officers use and perform in the different areas of their work environment and how they 'construct their world and

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protect it from outsiders' (Holdaway, 1983, p.35). In ethnographic fieldwork, the observer is in a unique position of having the opportunity to move between the public and private spheres of police practice to gain a fuller insight into how officers experience, understand and manage their work in the different spaces they occupy.

Thirdly, the process of taking part in officers' routines enables the ethnographer to hear their talk and observe their action to develop the relationship between what officers say they do and what they actually do as these are not always the same. Police officers have been observed as acting without engaging in an explicit evaluation of the situation they are confronted with; 'they are pragmatists who act first and rationalise later' (Manning, 2014, p.533). These distinct phases of practice construct different perspectives which in turn feed into the 'multiple realities' of policing. An ethnographer can observe each stage of an officer's execution of their role, from the act as it unfolds on the street through to its articulation and presentation in the office, to understand the process of interpretation, and the relationship between action and talk. This is particularly important given that 'the core of the work in policing remains the officer working alone, taking on and shaping work as he or she defines it' (Manning, 2014, p.534).

The preceding points provide a snapshot of the suitability of ethnography to the particularities of policing. Of course, in the social sciences there are issues of validity and reliability which, in the case of ethnography, have been emphasised to reject its legitimacy as a method, particularly in researching organisations (Zickar and Carter, 2010; Punch, 2015). The cause of this contention rests with ethnography being assessed according to the criteria for validity and reliability used in experimental forms of research with specific concerns raised about the potential personal bias of the researcher (Zickar and Carter, 2010). However, ethnography fundamentally differs from quantitative methodology, and so addressing its credibility necessitates different techniques which are embedded into the processes of data collection and analysis (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). Moreover, the realisation that human behaviour is never static, and subjectivities enter the research process whatever the method employed highlights uncertainties that exist across the

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qualitative/quantitative divide (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; Zickar and Carter, 2010). From corroborating fieldnotes with participants and colleagues; observing many participants across different sites over a prolonged period of time; recording everything, even the seemingly routine and insignificant; through to self-monitoring and providing reflexive accounts, ethnographers utilise numerous approaches to increase the credibility of their work (Muir, 1977; Lecompte and Goetz, 1982; Holdaway, 1983; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Essentially, 'ethnographic studies, by their nature, are more likely to be sensitive to important contextual and cultural variables' which appropriately positions the method as a valuable tool for knowledge-production in the field of policing (Zickar and Carter, 2010, p.312). This way of seeing the world incorporated into the research strategy brought to the fore a particular set of theoretical and philosophical assumptions which formed an important part of selecting an ethnographic research method.

Philosophical and Theoretical Perspective

Accessing the social world of police officers and staff to make sense of their 'local, subjective reality' as experienced by them to draw insights about patrol emphasised the importance of 'interpretative understanding' in this research (Scott, 2009, p.16). It highlighted that human behaviour is not predictable but is subject to how people interpret situations and influence each other (Scott, 2009, p.24). This idea that meaning is 'constructed by the interpretative acts of the interactants' aligns with symbolic interactionism (Fink, 2016, p.8). Symbolic interactionism is a 'style of sociological reasoning and methodology' that has a contested history and has been shaped by a number of thinkers (Rock, 2001, p.26). Herbert Blumer, influenced by the work of George Mead, offers a straightforward conceptualisation of symbolic interactionism and its methodological implications (Fink, 2016; Rock, 2001). Symbolic interactionism, according to Blumer (1969, p.3), is founded on three premises: people act towards things on the basis of meanings, the meanings of such things are derived from the social interaction one has with others, and these meanings are managed and revised through an interpretative process by the

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individuals concerned. Using these principles, the basic ideas of symbolic interactionism are that human society consists of people engaging in social interaction, that this involves people taking account of the actions of one another as they form their own action and that this occurs through a dual process of indicating to others how to act and interpreting the indications made by others (Blumer, 1969, p.10). Social action occurs within this process of social interaction and involves individuals 'noting, interpreting and assessing things' they are confronted with in order to act, and devising a 'prospective line of action' (Blumer, 1969, p.56). Taken together, people are 'reflexive and self-aware agents' capable of transforming and continuously constructing their social worlds with communication (and interaction through communication) forming an integral part of this (Jacobsen, 2017, p.14).

Taking a symbolic interactionist position, it follows that to make sense of social action one has to get close to it and see it in terms of the actors and the processes by which it is constructed; all of which emphasise the importance of a 'naturalistic investigation' (Blumer, 1969, p.46 and p.55). Knowledge, as Rock (2001, p.29) summarises, 'is not won in the library but in the field.' Accordingly, an ethnographic method provided a means of seeing patrol as it is seen by police officers and staff in its natural state, that is to observe how police officers and staff 'define the situations' in which they participate, what they take into account and the process by which they interpret this (Blumer, 1962, p.180; 1969, p.56). It was an approach that could facilitate the type of 'descriptive accounts from actors' required to fully understand how they see, act and refer to patrol in a variety of situations (Blumer, 1969, p.61). At the same time, it was equally important to acknowledge that I would never be telling the story exactly how police officers and staff might tell this story themselves; I would 'be there' to see their world, but I would also 'be here' to present their world (Pearson, 1993, p.viii-ix). The type of knowing that results from 'watching, listening and asking questions' is very different from the type of knowing that takes place when 'one is directly responsible for one's own actions in a specific situation' (Van Maanen, 1981, p.490). Accordingly, the descriptive accounts I reproduced would be 'provisional, bound temporally and contextually, shaped both by [my] particular purposes and experiences [...], and by the encounters which [I] had with particular'

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police officers and staff in the field (Rock, 2001, p.31). Subsequently, I recognised how my personal background was a factor actively influencing the methodological choices I had made (Reyes, 2020).

Personal Influences

My most recent employment in the National Probation Service was an aspect of my background that I considered factored into my choice of a research method that sought to gain an 'insider' perspective. During my time working in probation, there were significant organisational changes as part of the 'transforming rehabilitation' agenda to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. However, I believed staff had not been sufficiently incorporated into the design and implementation of the subsequent operational arrangements which, I judged, resulted in a disconnect between the policy and practice context to the extent that working conditions and service delivery were unsatisfactory. This experience highlighted the importance of understanding and developing insights into the day-to-day reality of criminal justice work from practitioners' perspectives to improve how policy is devised and executed. Therefore, the opportunity to research an aspect of policing where there was little understanding of the practice context from the experiences of police officers and staff demanded, in my view, an immersive research method, like ethnography, that could capture it.

Ethics

Wildebay Police force was pre-selected for the study. Due to the study forming a strand of a wider research initiative, formal authorisation to conduct ethnographic research in the force had already been granted through the Chief Officers' group, Police Federation and other staff associations. The opportunistic rationale for choosing Wildebay Police as the research site is not uncommon in ethnographic research where the selection of a setting often comes first (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). At the same time, I conducted my Masters research in Wildebay

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Police and it seemed logical to continue to study this force, especially given that it was an unexplained aspect of the findings from my Master's study which shaped the focus of this research, as summarised in the introduction. With preliminary research access already agreed with Wildebay Police, I was quite quickly able to submit an ethics application to the University Ethics Committee. It set out my plans to conduct non-participant observation and unstructured interviews of police officers and staff situated within NPTs in the course of their duties across a number of locations, including police stations, police vehicles and public spaces. As part of my application, I proposed procedures to ensure informed consent was gained from participants; confidentiality and data protection was maintained; and plans were in place to address potential risks to the participants and myself⁷.

The ethics application was reviewed by the Central University Research Ethics Committee and involved a largely straightforward review meeting with the ethics panel. There were no concerns about the research subject and the proposed methods, but some practical queries were raised, including what my position as a researcher would be if I witnessed criminal offences or I was questioned by members of the public during fieldwork. The below responses to these matters provided more detail and formed amendments to the original application, which was subsequently approved by the reviewers.

- In the event that members of the public query my presence with participants, I will explain my role as a researcher, and where they request, withdraw from the interaction.
- During observations of participants carrying out their routine duties, there is the potential to witness criminal acts or other incidents that might become subject to legal or other proceedings. In these circumstances, my position will be that of any member of the public who, if required, will be able to provide eyewitness testimony.

Having followed the standard University ethical procedure and received approval, there was an initial sense that the ethics of my study had been taken care of.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for copies of the participant information and consent forms.

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However, ethical considerations, especially in ethnography, are not clear-cut and simply fulfilled by following a set of guidelines (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001); something which can be further complicated by the law when the research relates to crime (Elliott and Fleetwood, 2017) and by the potential to witness occupational deviancy in policing (Norris, 1993).

From recruiting, relationship building through to using fieldwork data, there are a great deal of ethical dilemmas facing the ethnographer. To begin with, the idea that participants are given the opportunity to provide informed consent assumes that all those who could be potentially involved in the research are identifiable before it commences; that the research project is not only clearly defined from the outset, but the definition is portrayed in the same format to all persons; and that participants will remain aware of their involvement in the research after giving initial permission. In actuality, an ethnographer has no control over the field of observation (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001); it is a natural setting where it is impossible for the many persons present to be informed about the research or freely consent to participate (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Moreover, of those that do provide informed consent, they are often only being presented with a partial version of the research project. The information provided about the research is usually vague in nature related to it being adapted in a layperson format to make it understandable; the focus of the research usually taking shape over the course of the fieldwork; and the risk of revealing specific details influencing participants' behaviour in a way that might undermine the findings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). In addition, once initial consent is provided, it is likely that participants will forget about their involvement in the research and will not be able to gauge when the researcher is 'working' or having 'time out' (Shaw, 2010). It is disruptive, if not impossible, to continually remind participants that 'anything you say or do may be taken down and used as data' (Bell, 1977, p.59; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, the extent to which participants are able to provide informed consent in ethnographic research is questionable, and this ethical challenge continues as fieldwork progresses.

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In ethnography, researchers are encouraged to build rapport and trust with participants to reduce the potential stress and anxiety of taking part in the research, including the potential for the participant to perceive that the researcher is evaluating their work or them personally, and encourage them to act as they would were the researcher not present (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). While on the one hand, developing relationships with participants is considered a way to lessen the possible harm caused by the research, the nature and extent of these relations between the researcher and the researched can be equally harmful. Some academics argue that the research relationship is deceitful and exploitative; the researcher seeks to develop a reciprocal relationship with participants to elicit information, which may involve giving a false impression of oneself, before leaving the field with the participant having received nothing in return (Wolf, 1996a). Others suggest that exploitation only occurs when the researcher takes advantage at a 'real cost' to those researched (Wolf, 1996b, p.217), although most benefits and costs cannot be measured definitively (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Even taking a collaborative approach with participants and involving them in the research process still involves the researcher exercising some control over the procedure (Chase, 1996). This raises the issue of power which is embedded in research – starting with the 'different positionalities of the researcher and the researched'; taking shape in the definition of the 'research relationship, the unequal exchange and exploitation' in the research process; and continuing in the 'post-fieldwork period of writing and representation' (Wolf, 1996a, p.2).

The collection and analysis of descriptive data about people and their organisations involves a level of abstraction, generalisation and classification that carries implications for the persons researched. The nature of social research fundamentally questions participants' rights to self-definition – 'who has the right to interpret another's reality, to define what should or should not be included and what meanings should or should not be attributed, and by what right do they do so?' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.345). Essentially, participants' 'cherished values, questionable practices and guarded secrets are put on display for others to see and judge' (Van Maanen, 1981, p.491). Accordingly, researchers' interpretations, as Josselson (1996,

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p.70) argues, will always be 'intrusive and narcissistically unsettling' for participants. This politics of interpretation is captured by Brettell (1993) who presents studies where ethnographic texts have caused informants to feel betrayed (Davis, 1993); led to factionalism within the organisation studied (Glazier, 1993); and resulted in the researcher being labelled an 'outsider' (Jaffe, 1993). The actual or perceived misrepresentation of participants highlights the subjectivity in research where it is not a question of 'whether we should take sides, [...] but rather whose side are we on?' (Becker, 1967, p.239).

To navigate the identified ethical challenges, my awareness of the inherent difficulties in respecting participants' rights combined with the University ethical guidelines formed part of an ongoing process of personal reflection and contributed to my decision-making about my research practices throughout the fieldwork. I was continually thinking about the nature of the research alongside the potential for harm to be caused to the participants, the police organisation, the University, the wider public audience and myself, which included considerations of honesty and fairness; anonymity and confidentiality; and integrity and carefulness in my research practice. This position aligns with the notion that ethical practice is not exclusively dependent upon codes of practice but involves the moral character of the researcher and their judgement in the research setting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Murphy and Dingwall, 2001; Shaw, 2010); 'every fieldworker should be her own moralist' (Punch, 1986, p.79). To focus on my moral obligations necessitated a 'realistic' view of human relations and likely consequences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and a reflexive approach that incorporated an understanding of what was required of participants to be involved in the fieldwork - 'the informant game' (Van Maanen, 1981, p.492).

Accessing the Field

The lead gatekeeper selected and put me in touch with two NPTs, Seabarrow and Seawynne, that had been purposefully selected based on the criteria that they would

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provide a contrast in terms of their policing priorities and relationships with residents. The introductions resulted in two separate face-to-face meetings: one with the Chief Inspector and Inspector of Seawynne NPT; and one with the Inspector of Seabarrow NPT. The agenda of the meetings was similar in each with the officers seeking more information about the proposed research and the practicalities of conducting fieldwork. The nature of the discussions suggested that they were interested to ascertain the utility of the research to Neighbourhood Policing at the same time as gauging the impact it would have on the day-to-day running of their teams. While no specific issues were raised, I was keen to reinforce that I perceived my role as one of learning to develop understandings in Neighbourhood Policing; that it was my intention to cause minimal interference in the daily functioning of the NPTs; and that I was committed to maintaining the anonymity of participants. I adopted this approach to alleviate potential anxieties that I perceived may have existed around the intrusive nature of this type of research, especially as the selected NPTs had not experienced an academic observer and the participants in my Masters research had alluded to the ever-present public critique of policing. The seemingly straightforward process for gaining official access to the NPTs seemed to reflect, what Reiner and Newburn (2008) identify as, a wider acceptance of police research over the last 20 years.

The meetings with the Inspectors and Chief Inspector, including the lead gatekeeper, in the initial stages of the research were, in my view, also a form of assessment. I believed that it was important to demonstrate my experience of the Criminal Justice System generally, my understanding of Neighbourhood Policing specifically and my ability to conduct police research to not only gain authorisation, but overall acceptance into the NPTs. With their stamp of approval and the rank-and-file structure of policing, I perceived that I would be straightforwardly received well by all staff under their command. However, I realised that the real test started at the point I was introduced to the Sgts with whom the Inspectors had delegated oversight of my fieldwork to. It reflected the fundamental distinction that is customarily experienced in ethnographic police research between gaining formal access and achieving 'social access on an everyday, interpersonal level' (Loftus, 2009, p.202).

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The Sgts, particularly at Seawynne, during initial contacts questioned me about the aims and outcomes of my research and managing the fieldwork setting. The regularity with which I experienced this format of introduction was such that I labelled it in my personal reflections as the 'initiation'. On the surface, the questioning seemed reasonable given that the Sgts did not know me and most likely wanted to gauge the level of intrusion my presence might cause. However, their responses, usually at the end of these conversations, sometimes took the form of short summaries of how they perceived me, for example 'you seem sensible' [Obs 4 – 27/09/17] and 'you're switched on' [Obs 5 – 06/10/17]. The manner of these concluding remarks suggested that they had structured the discussions to gain some measure of my character so as to examine my acceptability to observe their teams. In combination with the initial discussions with the Inspectors, the process of access shared similarities with, what Cunliffe and Alcadipani (2016, p.542) frame as, a 'transactional relationship' in the sense that my status and credibility as a fieldworker was sought through an examination of my articulation of the research and competency to work in a policing environment. The positive, and as I interpreted it, supercilious nature of the Sgt's assessments of me indicated that I had passed the test so to speak. This experience of 'passing the test' in fieldwork is highlighted by ethnographers who report a range of 'subtle and not so subtle, unpleasant, awkward, violent, or ethnically or emotionally challenging' tests to gain acceptance and credibility which, I soon realised, extended beyond the initial gatekeepers to participants (Lindberg and Eule, 2020, p.125).

The Landscape of the Field

This section sets out the overall structure of Neighbourhood Policing in Wildebay and describes the individual layouts of Seawynne and Seabarrow NPTs to provide context to how the fieldwork was experienced and highlight the subtle differences that existed between the sites. Around six months prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, Wildebay Police had undergone an organisational restructure which, in

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relation to the NPTs, had resulted in the amalgamation of teams to cover fewer larger neighbourhood areas realigned with the metropolitan boroughs of the county. The reorganisation of the NPTs involved the relocation of staff from satellite offices situated within neighbourhoods to one or two larger police stations in the newly mapped areas. While some of the satellite offices remained in use, most were closed with a view to being sold, and all staff were required to start and end their shifts at the centralised police stations. The changes, it seemed from fieldwork discussions, were related to the force making financial and efficiency savings to reduce costs from funding multiple premises, increase flexibility in the deployment of staff to cover the larger geographical areas and better meet wider force priorities. Consequently, a lot of staff had experienced changes in the composition of their teams and their dedicated beats to the extent that some were adjusting to new locations and colleagues at the same time as adapting to a new way of working to accommodate the larger neighbourhood areas. Each NPT area had at least one main town centre and outlying suburbs, some rural and some coastal, which comprised a combination of, what the participants described as, deprived and wealthy localities.

Seawynne NPT

Seawynne NPT consisted of approximately 5 Sgts, 19 PCs and 32 PCSOs⁸ split between three smaller sub-teams across two police stations which were under the supervision of one Inspector and one Chief Inspector. The two police stations, labelled A and B for the purposes of this section, housed other policing teams with different operational responsibilities, but they were slightly different in layout. Station A was medium in size and located in a large town, and it was here that I conducted 8 out of 10 of my observations of Seawynne NPT. The sub-teams were located between 4 offices positioned next to each other on the same corridor. The Sgts were in one; the PCs and PCSOs were spread across two; and a PC with a specialist function was in another. There was an additional small 'overspill' office

⁸ Due to the transient nature of staffing in both NPTs, even during the short time I was conducting my fieldwork, only estimated levels of staffing are provided.

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situated at the other end of the corridor that was unoccupied and provided extra desk space if required. The Inspector's office was located on another floor and staff lockers were situated on the ground floor of the station. The offices were small with the largest of them containing a projector screen used for the briefings at the start of shifts. To give an idea of size, when all staff in one of the sub-teams assembled for their briefing in the largest office, some sitting on chairs and some standing, the room was full. The staff had created makeshift tea and coffee areas, but they all took their breaks in a dining area with a kitchen on another floor. Station B was smaller in size and located in a market town. In the main, fewer people were based here, and a number of empty rooms and desks indicated that a lot of staff had been relocated to other police stations as a result of the restructure. The sub-team was the smallest out of the three and was located in a large, half empty, office on one floor with a separate small kitchen and seating area for breaks. The Sgt was located in another office on the same floor.

Seabarrow NPT

Seabarrow NPT differed slightly from Seawynne in that it was split into two divisions each with a separate Inspector and both managed by the same Chief Inspector. Only one of the divisions formed part of the fieldwork and it was located in one medium-sized police station in a town. It consisted of approximately 4 Sgts, 9 PCs and 21 PCSOs split across three sub-teams. The NPT was in a large open-plan room shared by the PCs, PCSOs and Sgts with the Inspector located in a connecting side office. There was a small kitchenette attached to the office space and all staff used a separate dining area in a room on the same floor for breaks. In the main office area, there was a small conference table with a projector screen that staff gathered around for briefings at the start of their shifts.

The subtle differences in structure and layouts in Seawynne and Seabarrow NPTs created quite different fieldwork experiences. In Seawynne, the small size and tight arrangement of the offices felt quite restricting, both for the staff who were often

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moving a lot between the small spaces to speak to each other, and for myself who was trying to avoid getting in the way. When most staff from one or two of the sub-teams were in the offices, it quite quickly became overcrowded which meant that there was either not a desk for me to sit at, I could occupy a desk for short time before being moved or I had to sit at a table that had little room for staff to manoeuvre around me. For the most part, this was not an issue as the offices were rarely fully occupied and I did not spend a lot of time there. However, as a non-member of staff who was trying to blend in, it was quite awkward to navigate, and I was constantly thinking about how to position myself to cause the least disruption. This most likely contributed to me being directed to the 'overspill' office on two occasions at the start of observations to wait for the participants. Being situated in the 'overspill' office was quite isolating as not only was it located out of sight of the other offices, but it reinforced for me a sense of causing inconvenience and not belonging to the group. In contrast, the office space in Seabarrow was less problematic. After the Sgts directed me to sit at their desk during the initial part of the first observation, I quickly managed to establish a new seating position at the conference table that did not interfere with any of the staff workspaces or align me with management. This became my regular spot and it felt more comfortable having somewhere I could go to without having to consult staff or cause any disruption, especially as I tended to be in the office for longer periods in Seabarrow.

Negotiating the Field

Researchers have reflected on their personal biographies and positionality in the field to highlight how their identities impacted upon their engagement with participants and the kind of descriptive accounts generated (Bourke, 2014; Hollis, 2014; Loftus, 2009; Marks, 2004; Stockdale, 2017). This section will show the negotiations, influenced by my identity, presentation and research persona, that created my 'ethnographic self' in fieldwork (Coffey, 1999, p.36). From the moment I entered the field, I was very aware of the significance of my identity, specifically how I sensed others were perceiving me, which formed an ongoing part of my personal reflections

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and informed both how I interacted and how I interpreted others interacted with me. I likened the initial experience of entering the NPT offices to walking into a rural village pub and all the locals turning and staring before resuming their conversations. Dressed in plain clothes with a rucksack and being introduced as a 'student from the University' situated me firmly as an outsider (Brown, 1996). Given my visible young female appearance, I immediately sensed that I was assumed to be a naïve undergraduate student learning about the world and gaining some work experience. With this in mind, the following paragraphs will attempt to capture how I believed my individual 'ethnographic toolkit' – my social capital and personal characteristics - shaped the field dynamics (Reyes, 2020, p.221).

In both NPTs, the Sgts decided who I observed during each shift. This sometimes altered, with the Sgt's authorisation, depending on what transpired during the shift, for example on one occasion I switched from observing Artie and Junior to their colleague for a brief period when they were booking someone in at a custody suite (Obs 5 – 06/10/17). The manner in which the Sgts approached police officers and staff to gain their consent for participating in observations varied. A couple of Sgts asked staff outright if I could accompany them on their shift while others had arranged it prior to my attendance, and one Sgt tended to speak to staff in private while I waited in another room. Admittedly the recruitment procedure was very different to the one I envisaged in my ethics application with the extent to which identified participants could freely give their consent to the research being heavily influenced by the rank-and-file structure of command in the organisation (May, 1997). No police officer or police staff member that I witnessed challenged an instruction issued by one of the Sgts which most likely meant that when they were asked if they would participate in my research, they interpreted it as a direction to comply with (Norris, 1993). To illustrate, on one occasion Tony asked Silvio over the radio if I could observe him for the rest of the shift, after a short pause, Tony added 'Sgt says', and Silvio instantly agreed (Obs 2 – 17/07/17).

The explicit display of compliance in the recruitment process initially felt awkward because, as Fielding (2006, p.281) highlights, 'those who indicate a general

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willingness to cooperate are not offering a blanket receptiveness.’ Nevertheless, this did not change how I approached identified participants in that I ensured I provided them with information about my research, either verbally or in writing depending on how we were introduced and their preference, and I obtained a signed consent form from them. In addition, in the introductory discussions I had with participants, I always reinforced their anonymity in the research and emphasised that I would take their lead, and do as they instructed, including removing myself from situations they did not want me to observe, to highlight their autonomy in the process. Recognising that there might be potential suspicions about my motivations, I also made a point of saying that I was not there to ‘spy’ on individuals for management, a characterisation I had previously heard a PC use to describe researchers. This combined with my approach to developing relationships with participants, described in more detail below, highlighted my attempts to make the ongoing process of access more ‘relational’ in nature, namely establishing relations characterised by ‘mutuality’, ‘integrity’ and holding myself ‘morally accountable’ to participants (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016, p.543).

The young female student label, I interpreted that I had been assigned on entering the field, was emphasised throughout my observations by the behaviour of the Inspector at Seabarrow and most of the Sgts, particularly in Seawynne. They would often gesture in implicit and explicit ways that I needed to be looked after. In terms of the Inspector at Seabarrow, unlike Seawynne, his co-location with the team meant that he was present in the office on a lot of occasions and spent more time with staff being sociable. I experienced his presence to be particularly disruptive as at different points during the fieldwork he drew attention to my outsider status and introduced me to other more senior police officers in a way that reinforced the aforementioned ‘label’ and linked me to management. During my first observation at Seabarrow, the Inspector light-heartedly asked me in front of the whole room whether everyone was treating me well and to let him know if they were not (Obs 1 – 10/07/17). On other occasions in front of the team, he apologised to me for swearing mid-way through addressing everyone (Obs 12 - 30/11/17), and lightheadedly reproached staff on their behaviour in my presence (Obs 14 – 14/12/17). This sense that I needed ‘special

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treatment' was maintained by the Sgt's oversight of participant recruitment and their monitoring of my whereabouts or how I was getting on during shifts. This usually took the form of checking in with me in passing during periods of downtime at the police station, although there were occasions when it was more noticeable. For example, during one shift when I was accompanying Adriana on foot patrol, Sgt Rosalie asked Adriana over the radio if I was with her and when Adriana replied 'yes', Rosalie cheered. Around twenty-five minutes later and close to the time when we would be returning to the police station, a PC contacted Adriana over the radio and stated that he would transport us back. Adriana commented, 'I like it when you're around', indicating that this would not have transpired had I not been there, and I wondered if the Sgt had prompted the PC to make this offer of transport (Obs 7 – 24/10/17).

The Sgts micro-management of me maintained emphasis on my outsider position in the teams throughout the fieldwork. Their supervision of the arrangements for the majority of my observations meant that I always had to go to the police station receptions, ask for one of them and usually wait for either them or another member of staff to escort me to the NPT office. This became less stringent at Seabarrow with some of the Sgts not being available on the days I was observing or appearing less concerned about my movements once I was in the office, and I was 'trusted' to make my own way from reception to the NPT on a number of occasions. However, it still placed me in an awkward position because I had no advance way of knowing the occasions when they would not be present or actively involved in managing my observations so when this occurred, I did not know if any of the participants I had been working with would be on shift or willing to have me observe. At the same time, the absences of the Sgts, at least in Seabarrow, allowed me to gauge the extent to which their oversight changed participants' behaviour towards me. In the main, I sensed that this particular management of me also served another form of subtly 'testing' how I was dealing with the policing environment and gauging my reaction as the fieldwork progressed – did I hold damaging opinions or have issues with particular individuals or practices?

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It was possible given the level of managerial oversight that the Inspector and Sgts set the tone for how the police officers and staff in their teams should approach and relate to me. Indeed, there were some indications of this in my interactions with police officers and staff, especially in the early phases of fieldwork or when they first experienced me. They tended to always take a very formal position, most visibly illustrated by them apologising for swearing or casually reprimanding each other if someone said something that might be considered inappropriate. In addition, there were occasions when police officers spoke to me or directed me to do something in a way that not only highlighted my outsider status but felt patronising. Examples included: PC DeAngelis asking me at the start of an observation if I needed to see anything specific for my 'little project' [Obs 14 – 14/12/17]; a trainee PC commenting that he was impressed that I was willing to put myself in risky situations to observe the police (Obs 12 – 30/11/17); PC Carmella directing me to 'come and sit down' on the only seat in the room while she and PC Gabriella conducted an interview (Obs 10 – 16/11/17); and a police officer at the front desk who had been instructed to let me go up to the NPT office alone commenting, 'they trust you, so I'll trust you' [Obs 13 – 07/12/17]. Relatedly, there was also a noticeable atmosphere of suspicion towards me, especially in the beginning of fieldwork. From quick glances to brief pauses in conversations, police officers and staff often seemed to be discreetly scrutinising my reaction to opinions, behaviours or incidents that they or others were expressing or performing. It appeared, as I perceived it, to form a way for them to ascertain if I was who I said I was and if I was amenable to and could be trusted with the 'backstage' of policing (Holdaway, 1980). It was most likely that suspicions of my motives were amplified by the fact that more senior ranks had approved and introduced me into the organisation (Ericson, 1982), and together with the Sgts supervision of me, there was the potential for me to be perceived as a 'management snoop' (Reiner and Newburn, 2008, p.358).

These perceived impressions and behaviours towards me, particularly in the initial stages of fieldwork, were a source of frustration, anger and awkwardness that influenced how I engaged with staff early on. I was infuriated by the thought that the teams viewed me as a little girl to be treated with caution as she learns about the

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world of policing, especially when a lot of the police officers and staff in the NPTs were younger than me. Furthermore, I worked in an organisational environment where humour involving a twist or joke that might seem insulting or harsh and the use of offensive language to 'let off steam' were commonplace (Fielding, 2006); I did not need to be protected. Fundamentally, what angered me was that this perception overlooked so many aspects of my identity that I valued, and which would not only have shown me to have life and work experience, but skills and knowledge relevant to how the police officers and staff negotiated their frontline roles. At first, I used any opportunity I could to mention my probation work to try to override the perception I considered the staff had of me and to build some rapport, such as referring to my practice experiences to demonstrate my knowledge of the criminal justice environment and the types of challenges facing the police, but it did not seem to increase my credibility. A lot of the police officers and staff knew very little about the National Probation Service, and if they did, they did not seem to accord the role much worth; one officer mentioned stopping a Probation Officer who was using their mobile while driving once.

Documenting my thoughts and feelings in a separate record to the fieldnotes after each observation was important to the research process. May (1993) details how researcher honesty about feelings and experiences during fieldwork is a source of strength to facilitate better understanding. It was also a way to separate my 'private self' from my 'professional researcher' self and deal with negative feelings (Blix and Wettergren, 2015, p.692). From reflecting on my initial feelings after the first few observations, I realised that I should not be internalising the 'feelings of inadequacy' the field interactions were triggering for me, but alternatively viewing them as part of a 'normal' process (May, 1993, p.79). I recognised that I was trying too hard to win the approval of the teams and I did not need to concern myself with making sure people had the 'right' impression of me; I was there to experience their practice worlds, not impose myself onto them. Relatedly, making reflection an integral part of my research practice emphasised and maintained my 'distance' and 'difference' during fieldwork; something which, Pearson (1993, p.xiii) identifies as, 'the touchstone of authenticity' in ethnographic research. Thinking about my identity and

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positionality immediately on commencing the fieldwork also made me conscious that I too was a subject in all my observations; I was both the researcher and the researched (Van Maanen, 1981, p.471). Consequently, I recognised the ongoing need to balance the way in which I responded to how participants perceived me with ethical considerations of building research relationships and appropriately managing the feelings and emotions it triggered for me. This resulted in me being in a state of hyper-awareness, or as Van Maanen (1981, p.474) describes, 'a strategic situational consciousness' in relation to how I presented myself and how I engaged with participants to maintain access and develop relationships. Each of these considerations will be discussed below.

Presentation in the Field

In the field, Coffey (1999, p.62) highlights that ethnographers engage in 'body work', including the conscious self-presentation, the spatial positioning and negotiation of the body, to establish an acceptable researcher role. I believed that my appearance and how I conducted myself during observations was particularly important because it was a way to demonstrate my professionalism and competence in managing the practicalities of policing. I did not want to feed into the impression police officers and staff had of me by appearing unprepared and ill-equipped to observe them. Accordingly, I tried to 'integrate and blend in' by making sure my clothes were as similar and functional as participants' uniforms (Blix and Wettergren, 2015, p.696). This was not only to avoid drawing unnecessary attention, but to be able to manage without issue the different environments and weather conditions the participants experienced during their shifts. A lot of the observations involved walking long distances in wintry and sometimes wet weather conditions across housing areas and parkland, and at times when I accompanied officers in vehicles, they were often cold and uncomfortable. Therefore, I quite quickly developed my own uniform of black jeans, black walking boots and a black waterproof with warm layers underneath. Furthermore, to make sure I could move around with ease, I did not take my rucksack out of the office. Instead, I carried my mobile and some emergency cash in my

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pockets in case I had to separate from participants and make my own way back to the office.

Outside the office, aside from following any instructions from the participants, I always made a point of not wanting to get in the way of what they were doing. I would step to the side or hang back when I sensed they needed some space to gauge the situation or persons before them, or when I considered my presence might be overwhelming for the member/s of the public or situation they were dealing with. This was sometimes logistically challenging when I was with two police officers or PCSOs and accompanied them into private spaces and there was little room for manoeuvre (Obs 6 – 16/10/17; Obs 16 – 10/01/18; and Obs 10 – 16/11/17). Despite trying not to stand out, this was inevitable given that I was a plain clothed or on a couple of occasions in the beginning at Seabarrow wearing a high visibility police ‘observer’ vest alongside uniformed police officers and staff. There were times when my presence attracted attention from the public: one person wondered if I was from CID (Obs 9 – 06/11/17); another person stopped me in passing and asked me about my role (Obs 28/07/17); and a couple of people approached me to find out if I had been arrested because moments earlier, they had seen me with the PCSOs (Obs 4 – 27/09/17).

Most of the time, however, the public did not question my presence which enabled me to fully observe the routine interactions police officers and staff had with the public. Participants either introduced me by simply saying she’s ‘with us’, ‘a student’ or ‘from the university’; or they did not say anything. The general level of public acceptance towards me was reflected by people on some occasions addressing their answers to PCSOs’ questions to me (Obs 8 – 01/11/17 and Obs 11 – 28/1/17). This highlighted the issue that in the absence of visible formal identification there was no way for me to know that my research role was the role that others were responding to (Van Maanen, 1978, p.346), and it raised the question of the degree to which I should participate in public interactions. Indeed, the public had the right to claim my participation (May, 1993). While I did not want to seem rude or ignorant and it was tempting to get involved, especially given my work background, I knew that it was

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not my place to actively engage in 'police business'. Therefore, in these situations, I conveyed my responses through verbal utterances and facial expressions that showed I was listening and understood their position without giving an explicit reply. This also reflected my general 'overt' and 'passive' research position during observations; I took on the role of a 'fan' (Van Maanen cited in Norris, 1993, p.127).

Related to not wanting to attract unnecessary attention, I did not openly take notes when I was out of the office with participants. Given my student identity in the NPTs, I believed the sight of me hastily writing down details would emphasise my different commitments and priorities, and possibly create awkwardness and tension if participants perceived I had a lot to write about their activities (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001). Instead, I was actively taking 'headnotes', that is remembering details of people, interactions, events and impressions of what I was experiencing, alongside making 'jottings', consisting of times and key words or phrases, on a note application on my mobile phone (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p.24 and p.29). The use of my mobile for jottings was useful because it was a conspicuous activity not readily associated with conducting research that attracted little attention, especially when participants were distracted, using their handheld devices or taking breaks. These 'participating in order to write' approaches were used to construct 'full fieldnotes' electronically as soon as was practically possible following each observation (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001, p.356). Although, I sometimes used the down time in the office when participants were completing computer work to start to type up full fieldnotes on my laptop to look busy.

The need to appear occupied formed an unexpected and large part of managing the fieldwork setting. Participants, particularly at Seabarrow, spent long periods in the office at the start of their shifts, either side of their break times and/or before the end of their shifts. These times were difficult to manage and I was always having an internal conversation with myself about how I should act and how it could be perceived: should I initiate or intercept conversations with participants or would this be too overbearing and get in the way of staff working?; should I complete work on my laptop or glance at my mobile or would this make me seem detached and not

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interested?; or should I sit and look around or would this make me appear bemused or bored? This was sometimes complicated by participants indicating that we would be leaving the office imminently to then take considerably longer leaving me ready and waiting aimlessly in the corridors or 'overspill' office. The combination of lingering and doing nothing was emphasised on a number of occasions when I spent long periods in the police station receptions waiting for a member of the NPT to escort me to the office. Once I waited for 50 minutes in reception after a miscommunication between the front desk and a Sgt (Obs 17 – 31/01/18). There were instances when the Sgts noticed that I was unoccupied and made a point of asking members of staff where the participants I was due to observe were (Obs 4 – 27/09/17) or prompt participants to go out sooner than they had planned so I could observe a patrol (Obs 3 – 28/07/17), which was equally awkward because I did not want it to appear to participants that I had expressed some form of frustration or cause them additional inconvenience.

Looking 'switched-on' was also a challenge outside the office during vehicle patrols, especially when I was accompanying two officers and sitting in the back seat, as the majority of the time nothing was happening. Unlike the media representation of policing, the 'everyday reality of patrols', as Fassin (2017, p.270) experienced in field observations of Parisian police officers, 'is a monotonous and tedious routine'. On one occasion, during a late shift on vehicle patrol, I was trying to fight the continuous need to yawn, and after a period of being silent, PC Servitto looked over his shoulder and asked, 'are you still awake?' (Obs 14 – 14/12/17). Paradoxically, doing nothing was exhausting! However, nothing is always productive of something (Scott, 2018). In this study, the 'something' was the ways in which police officers and staff could be seen to manage the boredom and attempt to 'give meaning to doing nothing' in my presence (Charlton and Hertz, 1989, p.301). They tended to refer to the busyness of a previous shift, the types of policing action they had experienced on patrol in the past or, what they considered to be, the more dynamic aspects of policing they believed I should also observe. This type of talk, also described as storytelling, is identified by policing researchers as a nostalgic practice that allows police officers to act out the drama of police work (Trujillo and Dionisopoulos, 1987), affirm the

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canteen cop culture (Waddington, 1999) and keep the job appealing at times of quiet (Holdaway, 1983). However, similar to Van Hulst's (2013) observations, in my fieldwork these stories ranged from the exciting to the mundane and appeared grounded in the context of police officers and staff passing time on patrol, which was valuable to gaining a sense of how they constructed their identity and environment. Nevertheless, these instances of waiting, hanging around and managing 'nothing' were often draining because no matter what was happening or not happening, I believed it was important to maintain the same level of enthusiasm, appreciation and satisfaction with participants so that they did not feel discouraged by my presence. This draws attention to the next consideration, managing relationships with participants.

Relationships in the Field

The process of building relationships with participants is often more complicated when researching 'restrictive contexts' (Purdy and Jones, 2013, p.298). Punch (1978, p.330) described overidentifying with his research participants, facilitated by the 'seductive' nature of the policing world, to fulfil their developing expectation of him as a colleague which, as he acknowledges, possibly compromised his observations. On the other hand, as Loftus (2009) points out, acting in ways that might be alienating could reinforce the 'outsider' status of the researcher and be equally damaging to observations. Accordingly, I needed to be able to demonstrate, as Loftus (2009) highlights in her own approach to observations, that I was human and could take a joke. At a morning team briefing early on in the fieldwork, PC Cifaretto sat across from me at the conference table, looked over and asked bluntly in front of the team, 'who are you? And where are you from?', to which all the staff burst into laughter (Obs 4 – 28/07/17). They were laughing at Cifaretto's directness and subsequently joked about his lack of social etiquette towards someone he did not know. I was a little taken off-guard but joined in with the laughter.

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The abovementioned occurrence summarised well the initial standoffish manner of some staff towards me and the subtleness with which, as I perceived it, they tested me to gauge my personal management – could I hack it? I negotiated a lot of the interactions in a similar way by adopting a friendly approach where I followed the tone of what was being said to be sociable without expressing any overt displays of agreement or disagreement. I assumed, what Fielding (2006, p.282) describes as, a ‘maximally agreeable demeanour.’ I also tried to reinforce this disposition when responding neutrally and approvingly to questions from the Sgts and Inspector (at Seabarrow) when they asked about my experience of the shift or team to demonstrate to the rest of the team that I understood police work was not performed in a prescribed way and that I was not reporting back on exactly what I was seeing or not seeing taking place (Norris, 1993). Together these interactional devices served to show that I could identify with participants’ personal and occupational inclinations and situations and demonstrate my commitment to confidentiality and anonymity while also evidencing that I was not trying to align myself with management or imitate being a member of the organisation. This allowed me to carve out a ‘social performance’ appropriate to the research setting and ‘manufacture’ trust in my research relationships (Van Maanen, 1981, p.476; Norris, 1993, p.132-133).

The ‘emotional labour’ involved in creating and upholding this social performance to gain, secure and maintain access was an integral part of my fieldwork experience (Coffey, 1999; Blix and Wettergren, 2015). I engaged in, what Blix and Wettergren (2015, p.697) conceptualise as, ‘quick adaptive deep acting’ that is entering research relationships with ‘attentiveness to its specificities’ and shaping my ‘researcher persona to fit’. For me, the persona was being positive, focussed and understanding to be as ‘physically and socially non-disturbing’ to be around as possible (Blix and Wettergren, 2015, p.697). This also meant that I did not express any negative emotions triggered by the way I was treated by others, and instead at these times, I took a submissive and gracious stance (Blix and Wettergren, 2015). Comparable to Purdy and Jones (2013, p.299), ‘my researcher-self’ played a ‘dominant role’. My research persona coupled with my young naïve student identity gave the impression

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that I posed no kind of disruption to participants or the everyday functioning of the teams. I sensed that this idea of me became more embedded in the NPTs as I observed different police officers and staff, and they experienced no difficulties from participating in my research. There were a couple of occasions on starting observations with new participants that they referenced my previous observations with others which, by the tone of their voice, suggested that they had asked about me and had been reassured by what had been said (Obs 5 – 06/10/17 and Obs 9 – 06/11/17).

Participants quite quickly relaxed around me and acted in a way that I assumed would be similar to if I was not present evidenced by the different personal and job-specific conversations I was party to, in which a range of thoughts, feelings and beliefs, some possibly controversial and offensive, were expressed. In addition, my research persona and identity facilitated participants, without prompt or direct lines of questioning, providing a lot of informal detail about processes, decisions and actions to develop my perceived limited knowledge. My presence possibly offered participants a 'rare and perhaps gratifying opportunity to speak with some authority on subjects' they knew best (Van Maanen, 1981, p.478). This suited my position as an interactionist ethnographer where gaining information about the seemingly obvious or irrelevant which everyone either knows already or is not inclined to probe further facilitates reproducing some of subjective knowledge about their social world (Rock, 2001, p.32). This level of access boosted my 'emotional energy' because I believed I was gaining a type of insider understanding which might not have been possible had I presented differently (Blix and Wettergren, 2015; Loftus, 2009). It was also likely influenced by my personal attributes, specifically my gender.

Gender is a significant characteristic that frames the different stages of fieldwork and can pose specific issues between researchers and participants (Warren and Hackney, 2000). Indeed, female policing ethnographers have referred to the challenges of becoming 'part of the scenery' in a predominantly male policing environment (Hollis, 2014; Loftus, 2009; Marks, 2004; O'Neill, 2002; and Westmarland, 2011, p.10). Similar to the experiences of these researchers, my female identity led to a

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paternalistic response from the Inspector, Sgts and some of the police officers, as previously described, and it probably contributed to the initial formal reaction I received from staff in the NPTs and the general sense that I was harmless as the fieldwork progressed. Accordingly, my femaleness was beneficial to negotiating access quickly with participants, and in some ways, this shaped my research persona and how I expressed myself throughout the fieldwork. I adopted, as the preceding paragraph sets out, an empathetic and subservient approach which are characteristics commonly associated with women, and as such will have most likely reinforced my status as a female to be looked after (Hunt, 1984). However, unlike the experiences of other female policing ethnographers, I did not feel any pressure to explicitly 'prove myself in a hyper masculine atmosphere' (Hollis, 2014, p.159; Marks, 2004) or construct a more masculinised social identity (Hunt, 1984) to fit in. This might have related to me observing the 'softer' aspects of police work that are more aligned with feminine skills and personality traits and are therefore more accepting of a female presence (Hunt, 1984; O'Neill, 2002). Additionally, the cultural environment could have been influenced by the significant number of females of different ages in PCSO, PC and Sgt roles working in both NPTs.

Participants always appeared to be aware of me, for example they joked, 'don't write that up' (Obs 5 – 06/10/17; Obs 19 – 02/02/18). However, these moments also indicated that participants considered they could contribute to my research and were more accepting of my presence (Purdy and Jones, 2013). Similarly, there were a lot of occasions when participants would ask me about my thoughts on Neighbourhood Policing from what I had experienced or my judgements on how they had handled a particular interaction. I understood that these types of questions were a means of showing an interest in what I was doing and what I had to say, but I was also aware that they could be an indirect way of gauging how I perceived policing and more specifically, the policing in Wildebay – was I aligned with their way of thinking about the job? It was often difficult to answer these questions as at that time I did not have anything insightful to report, nor did I want to take a particularly vocal stance, but I also did not want to appear inattentive and incapable. To balance out these conflicts, I tended to reply as neutrally as possible by reflecting back the opinions or

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considerations expressed by the individual/s asking the questions to show, at the very least, that I understood the context of Neighbourhood Policing and their perspective. The level of acceptance seemed to increase as fieldwork progressed and was most visibly evidenced in Seabarrow when the Sgt provided me with a high visibility outdoor jacket labelled 'police' to protect my clothing when the team were executing search warrants (Obs 19 – 02/02/18). I gratefully took the jacket, but not wanting to wear it and knowing that it was unethical to do so, I managed to leave it behind in the police carrier without anyone saying anything. At the same time, I was not uniformly accepted by everyone, specifically in Seabarrow where there seemed to be a small clique of PCSOs that never acknowledged me, and I was never given access to observe them (Obs 12 – 30/11/17).

The Sgt's micro-management of participant recruitment and observations could be seen as an attempt to control who and what I observed. However, in actuality the Sgts' oversight increased my exposure because I encountered a lot of staff over the course of the observations. The combination of the different sub-teams working alternate rotas and the fieldwork consisting of conducting observations across all the teams on different shifts resulted in me recruiting a large sample of participants and experiencing the different orientations to work the police officers and staff occupied. Similar to Van Maanen's (1981, p.484) characterisations, I observed the 'gung-ho' types predominantly dedicated to catching criminals; the 'cabbages' who did the bare minimum and actively avoided work; the 'high-minded professionals' who were committed to doing the job properly; the 'cop's cops' who were cynical of what could be achieved by strictly adhering to procedure; and the 'brownosers' who had carved out a particular role for themselves and worked with management to protect it. This allowed me to gain a good sense of the dynamics of how the teams functioned and how this shaped the way in which patrol was delivered. Overall, the way the recruitment process materialised created a 'fluidity' which, as Merritt (2010, p.735) identified in his own research, mitigated against participants being briefed to say the 'right' things. This was further evidenced in one observation when a Sgt took his break with the rest of the team and appeared to try to unsuccessfully steer the

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conversation towards, what I perceived he considered, was a more appropriate topic of conversation in my presence (Obs 15 – 17/12/17).

The Sgts always tried to offer their policing knowledge and asked if I had any questions about the job and if there was anything specific I wanted to observe, but from the outset, I had no particular requests. I wanted to be guided as much as possible by what the police officers and staff routinely did on a day-to-day basis, as opposed to receiving prescriptive responses and observing orchestrated activities. Yet, this lack of direction might have contributed to police officers on a number of occasions trying to show me aspects of Neighbourhood Policing they thought I should experience, or which possibly created an image of policing they wanted me to share. In a discussion with the Inspector at Seabarrow and a Superintendent he introduced me to, they talked about the prevalence of gun crime and blasé attitude of a lot of the residents in Seabarrow compared to other areas, like Seawynne (Obs 14 – 14/12/17). I sensed that a lot of emphasis was being placed on the danger aspect of the workload in Seabarrow. Similarly, a Sgt in Seawynne appeared to make a point of talking about the increase in knife crime and the UK approach to policing it in her introduction to me.

The emphasis on 'crime fighting' in my presence was noticeable in a couple of instances when the Sgts accompanied police officers and staff on patrol and seemed to be actively pursuing opportunities to show crime control, including completing stops of individuals to question them about what they were doing or to undertake searches, and chasing suspicious vehicles (Obs 7 – 24/10/17 and Obs 8 – 01/11/17). On another occasion, a Sgt and PC Cifaretto were enthusiastic for me to observe the team executing a couple of search warrants on properties suspected of growing Cannabis. When nothing came of the searches, except for highlighting a lack of reliable intelligence, all of those who had participated were visibly disappointed and PC DeAngelis commented to me, 'it would have been better for you if we'd found something' (Obs 19 – 02/02/18). The desire for the PCs to show me some policing action, possibly related to the aforementioned quietness on vehicle patrols, was also reflected in some of them taking the slightest of opportunities to put on the sirens,

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flashing lights and drive at speed, including when they were not far away from the scene and other officers were present (Obs 2 - 17/07/17) or when they were a long distance from the scene and in the knowledge that other officers on route would arrive before them (Obs 2 – 17/07/17; Obs 6 – 16/10/17; Obs 18 – 01/02/18).

Fieldwork Summary

The fieldwork was conducted over a period of eight months (July 2017 to February 2018). It consisted of 20 observations, 10 observations in each NPT, totalling 150 hours. The observations covered 15 'day' shifts (0800 until 1600 or 1800) and 5 'late' shifts (1400 or 1500 until 2200 or 0000) with the length of each observation varying between 5 hours and 10 hours. In terms of participants, the observations included 22 PCSOs of which 10 were female and 12 were male, and 19 police officers of which 9 were female and 10 were male. There were no minority ethnic PCSOs or police officers involved in the research which reflected the ethnic composition of the wider force and neighbourhood areas studied. Table 1 below sets out the specific details of each observation.

The shifts followed a common template in terms of how police officers and staff structured their time and the types of tasks they completed. The rest of this section will describe these to provide context for the findings and analysis. A typical shift started with staff checking the systems and their emails to get a sense of what had happened since their last shift and what they would most likely be doing on this shift, including any assignments they had been allocated. This would be quite quickly followed by a team briefing, usually led by one of the Sgts, which covered a handover from the previous shift; an update on local crimes, issues and persons of interest for the purpose of keeping staff informed as they carried out their routine duties, finding out further information or highlighting specific tasks that staff needed to complete; and allocating staff to jobs that were additional to their assigned workload. There were a lot of occasions when unplanned occurrences meant that police officers, PCSOs or both sets of staff were assigned to jobs that had to take priority for the

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shift, such as guarding crime scenes; assisting on criminal investigations or missing persons cases; being present at partnership initiatives or meetings; or conducting interventions to respond to recent incidents or intelligence, for example an open land search for knives. When this happened, it often disrupted everyone's plans because those who were not allocated any priority assignments were expected to cover the work of their colleagues.

Following the team briefing, police officers and staff proceeded with any priority assignments; continued with administrative computer-based work; and/or commenced completing routine tasks as a part of a vehicle or foot patrol that covered their dedicated beats. For police officers, these tasks included dealing with cases that had arisen from calls for service or were part of ongoing investigations assigned to the NPT; completing daily checks of places or properties where there were ongoing risk concerns, including residences where vulnerable persons were present; inspecting areas or properties where intelligence indicated possible criminal activity; or providing reassurance through attending places, events or properties where some form of public activity was taking place or there were concerns about crime. The tasks involved the police officers frequenting private residences, public venues, Courts and the custody suites located across the force area.

For PCSOs, their tasks involved delivering verbal or written crime prevention messages; providing support, guidance and reassurance around crime-related or social issues to local persons or groups, identified vulnerable persons or victims of crime; or following-up on or implementing enforcement action against low-level crime and disorder incidents. These activities were sometimes co-ordinated as part of initiatives the NPTs were participating in or delivering to address specific issues, for example working with the fire service to increase arson awareness in private residences or increasing crime prevention in specific areas experiencing heightened crime problems. The tasks and initiatives involved PCSOs completing visits to private residences, public venues and organisations; attending meetings; and staffing the

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mobile police station⁹. In the main, police officers and staff patrolled in pairs, but there were occasions when they went out alone or grouped together depending on the nature of the task, their individual workloads and resources available. This largely involved them dealing with groups of youths that were congregating in public spaces, causing nuisance and/or misusing substances.

The team usually returned to the office or a satellite office for an hour lunch or dinner break, either side of which they spent a variable amount of time completing computer work, before returning to their patrol and 'tacked on' activities (Wakefield, 2006). There were some differences in activities completed by each NPT which had been devised to develop more effective ways of working within their local areas. In Seabarrow, the NPT hosted a weekly partnership meeting in the office consisting of representatives from local agencies, which involved exchanging information, formulating multi-agency responses to identified issues or organising assistance to deal with specific anti-social or criminal problems or individuals. In Seawynne, the team allocated to the late shift on Fridays and Saturdays would go out together in a police carrier on a vehicle patrol to survey areas known for anti-social and criminal behaviour at the weekend and respond to any non-emergency calls for service in the NPT area at these times.

⁹ The mobile police station is a type of police vehicle best described as a portable office that takes on the appearance of a motor home. The two main functions of the mobile police station are firstly, to provide the police with a private workspace at events or incidents and secondly, to act as a base in places where the police decide to have a temporary stationary presence or to target a specific group of people to increase police-public contact. In the fieldwork, the PCSOs did not drive the mobile police station and used it for the latter purpose.

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Table 1 - Summary of Observations

Obs	Date	Shift	Time	NPT	Participant(s)
1	10/07/17	Day	07:45 – 15:30	Seabarrow	PC Christopher (M)
2	17/07/17	Day	07:45 – 15:00	Seabarrow	PC Tony (M) PCSO Paulie (M) PC Silvio (M)
3	28/07/17	Day	07:45 – 15:15	Seabarrow	Sgt Bobby (M) PC Cifaretto (M) PC DeAngelis (M) PCSO Germani (M)
4	27/09/17	Day	08:45 – 17:00	Seawynne	PCSO Meadow (F) PCSO Adriana (F) PCSO Furio (M)
5	06/10/17	Late	14:00 – 22:15	Seawynne	PC Artie (M) PC Junior (M) PCSO Vito (M) PCSO Patsy (F) PCSO Janice (F)
6	16/10/17	Day	08:30 – 16:30	Seawynne	PCSO Salvatore (M) PCSO Carlo (M)
7	24/10/17	Late	14:00 – 22:15	Seawynne	PCSO Adriana (F) PCSO Meadow (F) PCSO Furio (M) Sgt Rosalie (F)
8	01/11/17	Day	08:00 – 15:00	Seawynne	PCSO Charmaine (F) PCSO Ginny (F) PC Irina (F) Sgt Mary (F)
9	06/11/17	Day	08:00 – 16:45	Seawynne	PCSO Vincent (M) PCSO Frank (M)
10	16/11/17	Day	08:20 – 15:30	Seawynne	PCSO Benny (M) PCSO Hesh (M) PC Carmella (F) PC Gabriella (F)
11	28/11/17	Day	08:20 – 16:20	Seabarrow	PCSO Germani (M) PCSO Livia (F)
12	30/11/17	Day	08:25 – 16:00	Seabarrow	PCSO Germani (M) PC Angia (F) PC Eugena (F)
13	07/12/17	Late	14:00 – 21:15	Seabarrow	PCSO Carmine (M)
14	14/12/17	Late	14:00 – 23:15	Seabarrow	PC Servitto (M) PC DeAngelis (M)
15	17/12/17	Late	15:00 – 21:45	Seawynne	PC Gabriella (M) PC Bucco (M)
16	10/01/18	Day	08:30 – 16:40	Seawynne	PCSO Montisanti (M) PCSO Melfi (F)
17	31/01/18	Day	09:00 – 14:45	Seabarrow	PCSO Livia (F) PCSO Parisi (F)
18	01/02/18	Day	09:00 – 14:30	Seabarrow	PC Cifaretto (M) PC Fazio (F)
19	02/02/18	Day	09:00 – 14:00	Seabarrow	PC Cifaretto (M) PC Fazio (F) PC Angia (F)

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					PC DeAngelis (M)
20	14/02/18	Day	08:30 – 16:00	Seawynne	PC Artie (M) PC Curto (M) PCSO Barese (F)

Analysing the Field

Using my headnotes and jottings, I structured my full fieldnotes in a ‘descriptive’ format that detailed ‘the basic scenes, settings, objects, people and actions’ I observed in chronological sequence with no specific point or theme in mind (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p.58 and p.74). Within this, I used pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants; recorded dialogue through reported speech and paraphrasing with only verbatim phrases placed between quotation marks; and included myself as a character in the setting and interactions (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p.63 and p.72). On reflection, it occurred to me that my experience of reading Crown Prosecution Service documentation which includes police and witness statements indirectly influenced the structure and style of my description, dialogue and characterisation in the fieldnotes (Emmerson et al. 2011). Separate to each fieldnote, I completed a personal reflection, or as Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011, p.81) characterise, ‘commentaries’ which recorded a combination of personal reactions, feelings, thoughts and issues arising from my interactions with participants in the field, and specific aspects that I considered relevant to the research topic from the observation and, if applicable, their links with previous observations. In addition, after completing a number of observations, I completed another piece of succinct writing, similar to what Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011, p.80) label ‘asides’, that included summaries with examples of PCSOs’ actions and attributes; concerns surrounding their role; and the differences and similarities between their patrol work and that of PCs. Consequently, from the beginning of writing-up full fieldnotes, I was analysing what I had experienced, how it related to my research questions and connections between my observations (O’Reilly, 2009).

The combination of ‘asides’ and ‘commentaries’ started to organise my thinking and trigger questions or considerations to explore in subsequent observations, for

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example I noted ‘when police officers and staff refer to providing reassurance, what do they mean?’ Through these analytic writing tools, I started to engage in a ‘dialogue’ between the data and ideas to find concepts that would help me make sense of my observations (Atkinson, 2017, p.166; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The ideas that I generated started to take shape in Observation 5 when I identified that police officer and staff ‘presence’ and the ‘interactional spaces of patrol’ were significant to how police officers and staff engaged with the public. The specific formulation of these ideas is described in Chapter 4. These ideas connected with some of my interpretations noted in my asides and commentaries. However, recognising that they were vague and only offered a starting point for analysis, I turned to the literature to explore the subject of interaction in more detail. Having adopted a symbolic interactionist approach in my research, I knew that my interest in developing the ideas of ‘presence’ and ‘interactional spaces’ would focus on the micro-level of face-to-face interactions between police officers and staff, their environments and the public, and the meanings they attach to their behaviour (Scott, 2015). This led me to the work of Erving Goffman which conceptualises ‘how social actors present, perform and strategically manage different versions of themselves in different situations’ (Scott, 2015, p.11). While Goffman did not distinctly align his work with symbolic interactionism, it is regarded as a variant of this tradition (Scott, 2015).

Goffman’s work on face-to-face interaction, specifically that which is documented in his books titled ‘Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings’ (Goffman, 1963) and ‘Relations in Public. Microstudies of the Public Order’ (Goffman, 2010), examined social interaction in a way that provided a ‘template’ for making sense of my evolving interpretations and ideas around ‘presence’ and ‘interactional spaces’ (Atkinson, 2017, p.168). The next section offers more detail about the ‘fit’ of Goffman’s work with my observations and the basic premises of his analysis of face-to-face interaction. Returning to the process of analysis, on identifying the parallels between Goffman’s work and my fieldnotes, I engaged in an iterative process of reviewing my fieldnotes and Goffman’s (1963) key concepts of face-to-face interaction to establish a coding framework (see Table 2). I

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applied these ‘focused’ codes to the fieldnotes with accompanying ‘focused memos’, which elaborated on the use of the codes and made links between them (O’Reilly, 2009, p.37). Reviewing the focused coding and memos alongside further reading of Goffman’s (1963 and 2010) work, I created main themes and sub-themes which categorised the codes according to patterns in the types of interaction they were describing, their functions, their relationships to vehicle and foot patrol and their connections to developing community engagement (Bryman, 2012) (see Table 3).

Table 2 - Focussed Coding Framework Using Concepts and Definitions Taken from Goffman's (1963) Work on Face-to-Face Interaction

Unfocused Interaction (the kind of communication that occurs when one gleans information about another person present by glancing at them, if only momentarily)
Involvement Shields (shielding involvement by blocking perception of either bodily signs of involvement or objects of involvement, or both to conceal improper involvement and to affect appropriate involvement)
Side Involvements (an activity an individual can carry on in an abstracted fashion without threatening or confusing simultaneous maintenance of a main involvement) and Subordinate Involvements (an activity one is allowed to sustain only to the degree, and during the time, that their attention is patently not required by the dominating involvement)
Main Involvements (absorbs a major part of an individual’s attention and interest, visibly forming the principal determinant of their actions) and Dominant Involvements (one whose claim upon the individual the social occasion obliges them to be ready to recognise):
- Occasioned Main Involvements (an intrinsic part of the social occasion in which the situation occurs)
- Minimal Main Involvements (obliged to sustain a certain minimal main involvement to avoid the appearance of being utterly disengaged)
- Portable Sources of Involvement (brought forward whenever the individual feels they should have an involvement but does not)
Civil Inattention (one person gives the other enough visual notice to demonstrate that one appreciates that the other is present (and one admits openly to having seen them), while at the next moment withdrawing one’s attention from them) and Staring
Focused Interaction (when persons come into one another’s immediate presence and openly cooperate to sustain a single focus of attention)
Structure of Face Engagements (all those instances of 2 or more participants in a situation joining each other openly in maintaining a single focus of cognitive and visual attention e.g., conversation):
- Rationale (non-instrumental or mutual instrumental)
- Type of Encounter (conversational or non-verbal)
- Type of Gathering (fully-focused, partly-focused or multi-focused)
- Bystander Presence
- Initiation of the Encounter (the opening move – expression of eyes, statement or tone of voice)
- Personal Encounter (opportunity it provides or enforces some type of social intimacy)
- Type of Face Engagement (chats, greetings or friendly glances)
Accessibility (in every situation, those present will be obliged to retain some readiness for potential face engagements) and Inaccessibility (instances of hostility)

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Leave Taking Rights (just as the individual is obliged not to exploit the accessibility of others, they are also obliged to release those with whom they are engaged should it appear through conventional cues that they desire to be released)

Acquaintanceship (when each of two individuals can personally identify the other by knowledge that distinguishes this other from everyone else):

-**Type of Recognition** (cognitive recognition or social recognition)

-**Mere Acquaintanceship** (rights of social recognition form the principal substance of the relationship)

-**Tact** (when one party to the recognitional engagement is considered to have extra rights or to be worth treating carefully)

-**Development of acquaintanceship** (informally or formally)

Unacquainted Engagements (when any 2 unacquainted persons can properly join each other in some kind of face engagement):

-**Exposed Positions** (related to instances or types of persons that exposes them to engagement)

-**Opening Positions** (related to individuals who have a built-in licence to accost others)

-**Open Regions** (physically bounded places where any 2 persons, acquainted or not, have a right to initiate face engagement with each other to extend salutations)

Accessible Engagements

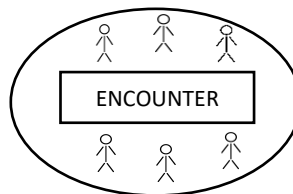
Communication Boundaries (The regulations that apply to a face engagement once it has formed and only when there are bystanders in the situation, that is persons present who are not ratified members of the engagement, involves a consideration of 'boundedness'):

-**Conventional Situational Closure** (when an individual is allowed to enter a region or is excluded from it, they will often be required to show some kind of regard for the physical boundary around it)

-**Accessible Engagements** (whenever a face engagement is accessible to non-participants there is a fully shared and an unshared participation. Persons in the gathering at large will be immersed in unfocused interaction and the ratified members of a particular engagement will be participating in focused interaction)

-**Conventional Engagement Closure** (effort on the part of the participants and bystanders to act as if the accessible engagement were physically cut off from the rest of the situation)

Gathering At Large



Uncontained Participation (Seeking some degree of intimacy with potential fellow participants in the encounter, the individual can be rejected or mistreated in a way that is visible to bystanders):

-**Diversion of Attention** (obligation of participants to withhold attention from matters occurring outside the engagement)

-**Scenes** (failure of participants in an engagement to contain their activity can cause the content and feeling generated to flow over into the situation at large)

-**Desertion** (leave-taking that terminates the engagement – designed to express rejection)

-**Tactful Leaving** (seize an opportunity to have a reason to leave)

Interpretations

Tightness and Looseness (another way of talking about the involvement structure - how disciplined the individual is obliged to be in connection with the several ways in which respect for the gathering and its social occasion can be expressed. More descriptive than informal and formal):

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-Social Setting -Roles -Orientation to the Gathering
Situational Improprieties (when an individual intentionally or unintentionally conducts himself in a way that others consider situationally improper, and shows thereby that he is either alienated from, or an alien to, the gathering): -Acts of Malice or Spite (imply arrogance, disdain and deep hostility. Represent some kind of extreme of intentionality) -Contingent Offenses (same as spiteful acts except the offender has reasons for his act outside of the occasion) -Offenses (because the individual is accustomed to a different idiom and structure of involvement) -Withdrawn (the individual could, if they wished, withdraw from their withdrawal) -Preoccupation (the individual who is too preoccupied, too nervous or too self-conscious to fit in)

Table 3 - Summary of Main Themes and Sub-Themes

Vehicle Patrol					
Conventional Situational Closure			Involvement Within the Situation		
Minimal Focused Interaction			Officers Display Properly Occasioned Activity (Able to Affect Appropriate Involvement)		
Officers Making Claims of Others from the Vehicle			Vehicle is a Barrier to Perception (Portable Involvement Shield)		
Others Making Claims of Officers Inside the Vehicle					
Foot Patrol					
PCSOs as Pedestrians	Civil Inattention	Unplanned Face Engagements	Accessibility	Acquaintanceship	Impaired PCSO Visibility
Externalization	Facilitating Orderliness	Conversational Encounters: Social Closeness and Relatedness Support and Assistance Intelligence Gathering Preventing and Addressing Low-Level Crime and Disorder	A situational Presence: Reinforces a Sense of Belonging Features in the Unfocused Interaction of Others Creates a Ripple Effect of Communication	Exposed Position of PCSOs	Impropriety: Situationally Improper Behaviours Assessments of Improper Acts and Persons
Scanning	Conveying Information	Speaking and Leave taking Rights	Conventional Engagement Closure: -Spacing	Mere Acquaintanceship: Cognitive Recognition Based	PCSO Inaccessibility : Low Footfall of People

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			-Regulation of Conduct -Integrity and Boundaries	on Social Information Social Recognition	Missed opportunities Organisational Change
Regulation of Street Traffic	Initiating Face Encounters: Supportive Interchanges Greetings Chats Communication Boundaries	Farewell Displays		Development of Acquaintanceship : Second Seeing Informal Formal	
Glancing				Cognitive Recognition Based on Personal Information: Unplanned Face Encounters in Passing Unplanned Visits in Passing Planned Meetings Tact	
				Maintenance Rites	

A Goffmanian Theoretical Framework

The work by Erving Goffman on everyday face-to-face interaction reveals it to be an area of social life worthy of investigation. Goffman considers face-to-face interaction to be a social domain characterised by ‘co-presence’ (whenever persons are present before others), and one that is naturally bounded by the expressive, communicative, perceptual and physical faculties of human beings (Smith, 2006). Through co-presence “persons [are] uniquely accessible, available and subject to one another” (Goffman, 1963, p.22) which brings about a wide array of communicative opportunities between them ranging from glances or gestures to physical comfort or assault (Goffman, 1979). Interactional conduct generated by co-presence, as Goffman’s description suggests, transcends the notion of people simply physically

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encountering each other. Instead, it brings to light a more nuanced understanding that takes account of the unavoidable emotional and cognitive components of face-to-face interaction (Goffman, 1963). Goffman understands interaction as comprising the conveyance of embodied information between persons in the form of linguistic messages, i.e., information given through talk considered intentional, and expressive messages, i.e., information given off frequently presumed to be unintentional (facial gestures, tone of voice, posture etc.), which they audit and monitor to make inferences about each other (Smith, 2006). Accordingly, a reciprocal process of giving and receiving information takes place among interactants establishing a 'special mutuality' between them as each person uses their experience of the other, and the knowledge that they are also being experienced, to guide their actions (Goffman, 1963). The routine occurrence of interaction requires a social competence as interactants order and coordinate socially sanctioned rules and conventions, both intentionally and unknowingly, in their production of encounters (Smith, 2006). Taken together, Goffman makes the point that the functioning of face-to-face interaction in everyday social situations goes beyond that of a setting with mere communication opportunities to one that constitutes a 'little social reality' that individuals uphold.

Goffman's work lends itself as an appropriate lens for observational research. It is a type of analysis that does not rely on knowing the actualities of participants' intentions and motivations, but the type of conduct that they and others sense they are maintaining. Indeed, the themes and concepts examining the processes, structures and elements of face-to-face interaction in Goffman's analyses, termed 'the interaction order' (Goffman, 1983), have provided a valuable theoretical framework for studying policing (Manning, 1997). There are a substantial number of contemporary policing studies that apply a Goffmanian analysis (see for example: Bullock, 2018; de Camargo, 2019; Lumsden and Black, 2018; Manning, 2001; Mawby, 2014; O'Neill, 2017), and within this area of the literature, there are a number which specifically focus on police encounters with the public (De Man, 2017; Kilgallon, 2020; O'Neill, 2002; Peterson, 2008; Sanders, 1979; Southgate, 1987; Quinton, 2020). However, these studies explore face encounters in the context of policing in other

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countries (De Man, 2017; Peterson, 2008; Sanders, 1979) and delivered by police officers (Southgate, 1987), including those with public order or response policing roles (Kilgallon, 2020; O'Neill, 2002; Quinton, 2020; Sanders, 1979). Furthermore, the analyses use Goffman to explore the demeanour of police officers and the public towards each other (Southgate, 1987); police management of interactions with suspects (Quinton, 2020), carnival revellers (Kilgallon, 2020), football supporters (O'Neill, 2002) and young men (Peterson, 2008); and forms of interaction between police officers and the public (De Man, 2017; Sanders, 1979). Therefore, the use of a Goffmanian analysis to explore face-to-face interaction between police officers and staff in Neighbourhood Policing roles and the public within the context of community engagement has not yet been completed. While the relevance of using Goffman as an analytical tool for this research topic is evidenced, this type of micro-sociological level of analysis is not without challenge.

Scholars caution the exploration of interaction at the micro-level as it risks constructing meanings that make a 'fetish' out of daily social life (Brittan, 1973). Gouldner (1970) takes this critique further by arguing that Goffman's work in particular depicts a superficial and amoral vision of the social world that neglects considerations of macro-level structures such as social stratification systems, wider societal conditions and the influence of power and morality in peoples' capabilities to present themselves. Recognising these arguments and taking a middle ground, Raffel (2013) contends that while Goffman provides a way of making sense of phenomena, there are 'blind spots' in his perspective which lead to an overly rational, strategic and oppositional view of social life. Nonetheless, Goffman (1959, p.9) himself acknowledged that his work was not without its 'inadequacies', and in focusing too heavily on these challenges, the essence of what his work actually sought to understand and what it achieved can be overlooked. Goffman, as Burns (1992, p.6) summarises, viewed the 'practice of social science as discovery' through which 'he made clear what was previously unclear, pointed to the significance of things which had been regarded as little or no consequence, and disentangled what was previously an indiscriminate muddle.' Positioning Goffman's endeavour more broadly in the field of social interactionism, Scott (2015, p.18) highlights that

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symbolic interactionism is not concerned with the 'why' of social action, but the 'how' of social order within which power relations and social divisions form an integral part of understanding the 'patterns of interaction', 'normative conventions' and 'agreed-upon definitions of reality'. Consequently, it provides a necessary conceptual framework for understanding 'how individuals are shaped by, and in turn, create elements of social structure' in their everyday activity (Denzin, 1969, p.922).

In more recent times, however, the nature of everyday activity has changed to the extent that the applicability of Goffman's work is called into question. Gergen (1991, p.6-7) argues that the growth of new technologies has expanded direct and indirect communication networks to the point of social saturation resulting in a 'multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self' and a 'multiplicity of incoherent and disconnected relationships' pulling in countless directions. Human action in this 'postmodern' society, he claims, cannot be understood using Goffman's concepts because they are rooted in a different cultural context and specific to a period of history (Gergen, 1991, p.149-150). Similarly, Henry (2020, p.9) highlights how an interactionist sociological perspective assumes that encounters involve the physical co-presence of human participants which disregards the growing use of technologies in mediating social interaction in policing; 'the whole experience of interaction and 'being there' has been, and is being, changed'. Henry (2020) goes on to pose new questions about what constitutes a police encounter in contemporary policing beyond face-to-face co-presence. While the landscape of encounters has no doubt diversified, particularly with the growth of new digital technologies, it could be argued that it is mistaken to dismiss the pertinence of using Goffman's work, especially in the field of policing.

Face-to-face interaction, as the literature around procedural justice identifies, remains a prominent part in how policing is represented, experienced and evaluated. Add to this the conclusions drawn in Chapter 2 around the lack of insight into the individualities of patrol work, the use of Goffman to explore the micro-elements of ordinary contact is fitting, especially when it is these very aspects of the everyday co-mingling of people that are often taken for granted (Goffman, 2010, p.249-260). This

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‘commitment to the everyday and the ordinary’ that Goffman’s concepts facilitate can allow the ethnographer to move beyond the evocative parts of policing, pay greater analytical attention to the minutiae of routine practice and explain important aspects of contemporary policing, in this case patrol work (Fassin, 2017, p.287; Sausdal, 2020).

To contextualise the analysis of patrol presented in Chapters 4-6, a number of introductory terms will be briefly outlined. Face-to-face interaction is classified as occurring in three types of unit, named ‘face engagements’, ‘social gatherings’ and ‘social occasions’. ‘Face engagements’ entail two or more persons who are at that specific time in one another’s immediate presence, typically engaged in conversation. ‘Social gatherings’ consist of all the persons jointly present to one another during any continuous period of time. The full spatial environment around the gathering is the ‘social situation’ within which any entering person becomes a member of the gathering. ‘Social occasions’ refer to the broader social context bounded by space and time in which engagements arise, for example a birthday party, and they provide an overarching structure for the activities that are expected to take place, termed ‘occasioned activities’, and the behaviour of the participants. To show engagement in occasioned activity, described as demonstrating some type of cognitive and emotional attentiveness to it, is to be involved in it. The allocation of an individual’s involvement, that is their ability to devote themselves fully or withhold their attention to an activity at hand, is considered an aspect of interaction that is inferred through customary non-verbal behavioural cues. In the presence of others, individuals realise that they must express something about themselves, and this unavoidably conveys information about their allocation of involvement.

Guiding co-presence during these units of interaction and regulating the allocation of involvement are a distinct set of rules called ‘situational proprieties’. Situational proprieties include ‘the common courtesies’ and ‘culturally learned practical knowledge’ about the non-verbal features of behaviour that are appropriate to different situations (Smith, 2006). The enactment of situational proprieties enables individuals to adjust their behaviour in lots of standardised ways to navigate

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particular social situations. When considering communication in interaction two steps are identified. Firstly, 'unfocused interaction' takes place when one person infers information from another by glancing at them, even if it is only fleetingly. Secondly, 'focused interaction' occurs when persons come into one another's immediate presence and "openly cooperate to sustain a single focus of attention" (Goffman, 1963, p.24). The next three chapters will, using Goffman's concepts on face-to-face interaction, describe in detail the aforementioned main themes and sub-themes formulated from the thematic analysis of my fieldnotes. They will show the communicative acts of police officers and staff conducting vehicle and foot patrol, the opportunities for and restrictions on contact with the public they can create, and how they can facilitate or hinder community engagement.

Chapter 4

Illuminating Police Visibility

The chapter will, using fieldnote extracts and concepts from Goffman's work on face-to-face interaction, illustrate how the visible presence afforded by vehicle patrol varies to that offered by foot patrol. The first part of the chapter will analyse the interactional space of the vehicle to show how it creates potential communicative barriers that can have implications for delivering community engagement. This will be contrasted with an analysis of the interactional space of the street in the second part of the chapter. From the position of the street, the communication opportunities brought about by PCSOs on foot will be explored to show how they illuminate a visible presence that can create the basis for a type of community engagement that vehicle patrol is unlikely to achieve.

The Interactional Space of Patrol

PCSOs Meadow and Adriana take me to an area of their 'beat' by bus. After completing some home visits, we patrol the area on foot. As we're walking along, Meadow greets and briefly talks to two residents in passing, and a little later, we pass the entrance to a traveller site. The PCSOs tell me about the families that live on the site, and they agree that, in the most part, the families are civil with them. In their experience, the families don't automatically have a problem with them because they are from the police; it is more when they've had a specific experience with the police that has left them feeling aggrieved that they take issue. Adriana recalls a time when one of the traveller children made her mother stop the car, so she could get out and say hello to Adriana. (Obs 4 – 27/09/2017)

Just over one week later, I'm accompanying PCs Artie and Junior on a vehicle patrol. As we drive around one particular area, Artie points out the crime hotspots and describes some of the problems experienced here. We approach a busy high street, and Artie notices a known male from one of the traveller

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families using a public payphone, which he suspects is related to drug activity. As we drive past, the officers make a point of looking at the male and he antagonistically stares back. This leads onto both officers telling me about the traveller families that reside in the area and their links to organised crime. The streets start to look familiar, and I suddenly realise that this is the same location I'd previously walked through with Adriana and Meadow. (Obs 5 - 06/10/2017)

In Wildebay Police force, the PCs conducted patrol exclusively in vehicles whereas for PCSOs patrol was largely performed on foot or bike, sometimes with the use of public transport to make the journey to and from the station. However, there existed an emerging tendency for PCSOs to use police vehicles when they were available to conduct patrol work. In the course of the observations, the visible presence of PCSOs during their foot patrols became noticeably distinctive from that of their PC colleagues – it allowed them to have a type of contact with the public that did not seem possible through vehicle patrol. Take the two above-mentioned fieldnote extracts, the foot patrol in contrast to the vehicle patrol of the same area varied considerably in terms of how the officers and staff experienced the space. It was not a matter of comparing the individual officers and staff or the general community focused remit of the PCSO role with that of the enforcement-led PCs, especially given both examples are specific to one moment in time on one day at one location, and it could have been very different for the officers and staff involved on a subsequent patrol of the same area. Instead, what was striking is the different interactional spaces that the officers and staff occupied from the position of walking on foot and travelling in a vehicle and how it possibly influenced the type and nature of the contact they experienced with the public. To illustrate the distinctiveness of the interactional space that PCSOs occupy on foot patrol and the contact it facilitates, consideration will first be given to the physical perimeters of vehicle patrol and its potential influence on the communication the officers have with the public.

Vehicle Patrol

Exploring any type of communicative contact that takes place within social situations requires an understanding of 'boundedness' (Goffman, 1963, p.151). In the case of the aforementioned patrol examples, the closed bounded region of vehicle patrol in comparison to the open unbounded space of foot patrol has the potential to create different communication possibilities. In the former instance, the police vehicle establishes an authoritative physical boundary around the officers that requires any member of the public to acknowledge it to both enter and avoid it. The boundary is not impenetrable – police officers can survey their surroundings, passing members of the public can see into the vehicle and focused interaction can take place. However, if an encounter with a member of the public is to occur it is expected to do so either across the vehicle boundary at a specific point (window or door) or within it at the invitation or approval of the officers inside. The window, in particular, offers a means for a type of 'partial participation in a situation' and it is expected that it will not be taken advantage of, for instance a person staring at the officers close-up through a closed window (Goffman, 1963, p.152). These assumed social conventions guiding interaction according to the physical boundary of the police vehicle can, 'among properly conducted members of the community', restrict how communication occurs between officers inside and the public outside (Goffman, 1963, p.152). Accordingly, the presence of the vehicle can produce 'conventional situational closure' where both parties recognise and respect the vehicle perimeter as cutting off more communication than it actually does (Goffman, 1963, p.152). To understand how the conventional situational closure brought about by the positioning of officers in a vehicle can influence the nature of their contact with the public, the following extracts illustrate the types of interaction observed during the fieldwork that typically took place when officers were conducting vehicle patrol.

Minimal Focused Interaction

It's mid-morning and after attending to a couple of assigned jobs PC Christopher indicates that he'll conduct HVP. We fleetingly pass through the leafy suburban

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residences, council housing estates and rural countryside that make-up the neighbourhood area, and Christopher highlights the types of crimes that are routinely reported and the different expectations of the police in each. We return to the station for lunch and leave again at around 12:45. Christopher mentions that we'll be patrolling the area again. As we're driving along Christopher spots some colleagues stationed in vehicles guarding a crime scene and he pulls up alongside them for a brief chat. We return to driving around the locality and this prompts me to ask Christopher about how effective he considers the van patrol to be in engaging with people. He describes how in a lot of instances residents are fearful or resistant to talking to the police whether officers are in a vehicle or on foot. However, he believes that he is still able to acknowledge people from the van and provide reassurance from being seen patrolling the neighbourhood. He goes on to recall a couple of occasions when being in the vehicle has led to his intervention in criminal incidents. At approximately 14:00, a call comes over the radio for Christopher to attend to a distressed female, but the job is cancelled when more information comes to light. Christopher continues to patrol until 15:00 when we return to the station. (Obs 1 – 10/07/17)

Officers Making Claims of Others from the Vehicle

Driving along the main high street, PC Tony points out the street drinkers who routinely gather on the same bench most days. As we turn a corner, a dishevelled male crossing the road glances at the police vehicle and dashes behind a tall hedge. Tony notices the male's behaviour and slowly drives past the hedge. The male becomes completely visible and is standing hunched with his arms covering his chest. He then proceeds to take a mouthful of what looks like a three-litre bottle of strong cider nestled inside his jacket. Tony leans over and shouts out the window, 'alright mate', to which the male sheepishly looks over and nods before zipping his jacket up over the cider bottle and walking on. Tony continues down the road. (Obs 2 – 17/07/17)

Others Making Claims of Officers Inside the Vehicle

Driving back to the station in the police carrier with PCs Artie and Junior and their Sgt, a female perched with two males on metal railings flags down the

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officers. The Sgt indicates that she'll pull over and Artie winds down his window. The female approaches and explains that they [a group of local taxi drivers] contacted the police over an hour ago to report a female that made off without paying her £15 taxi fare and no officers have responded to their call. Artie asks for more information and the complainant goes on to explain that they tracked down the female to the YMCA [the building directly behind her] and she wants the money that she is owed as the female is repeatedly getting away with evading taxi fares. The Sgt signals for Artie and Junior to get out and deal with the matter. (Obs 5 – 06/10/17)

The field extracts indicate that officers conducting vehicle patrol are less likely to have focused interaction with the public and when they do it is more likely to be formal in nature with either the officers or public making official claims of the other. The tendency for minimal verbal exchange with the public or communication limited to official lines of enquiry when officers are conducting vehicle patrol suggests that the conventional situational closure produced by the vehicle can inhibit or restrict verbal contact to formal exchanges between the police and public. While the focused interaction that does take place is meaningful in that it relates to the officers dealing with matters that involve or are suggestive of crime and disorder, the occurrence of conventional situational closure appears to largely act as a barrier to police-public contact, especially informal exchanges, making it difficult for community engagement beyond dealing with incidents at that moment in time to materialise.

The potential for conventional situational closure to reduce and limit focused interaction challenges the extent to which 'having a targeted visible presence in neighbourhoods', as set out in the College of Policing (2018a) guidelines, can be fully realised. If taken literally, as PC Christopher alludes to during his patrol, the visibility of a police vehicle alone can act as a sign to the public of the police effecting a specific presence in a locality. However, it could be argued that for a 'targeted visible presence' to be acknowledged as such by the residents of an area they would need to be able to distinguish that a passing police vehicle is fulfilling this engagement purpose. Otherwise, a police vehicle travelling around an area could be mistaken for

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other types of police work, for example officers driving to a specific incident. Subsequently, it is less likely that informal focused interaction will occur as the public do not necessarily know that patrol is taking place or that officers in the vehicle are approachable for everyday communication. Furthermore, as the below extract highlights, the conventional situational closure of the vehicle can also be exacerbated by other factors, including time of day, weather and the particular location(s) covered by the patrol, increasing the officers' inaccessibility for focused interaction during patrol.

At around 1600 I leave the station with PCs DeAngelis and Servitto in the police van. We drive along a main road of interspersed residential properties, takeaways, independent retailers and convenience shops. DeAngelis indicates that they're passing through this area as there have been a number of 'slashings' in the past couple of days. It's getting dark and traffic is starting to build up. We queue at a number of traffic lights and the officers chit-chat. As DeAngelis turns into a retail park, he mentions that they [the NPT] are conducting HVP around places that are potential targets for crime due to it nearing Christmas when there is increased demand for goods and more available cash. We drive past the shop entrances and follow a road around to the back of the stores completing a full circle of the premises. The officers remain chatting and DeAngelis weaves around the narrow roads and junctions making up the now busy car park to reach the exit. We join the slow-moving traffic on the dual carriageway to make our way to a neighbouring residential area. As we drive around the housing estates, I note the almost deserted streets with only the lit outdoor Christmas decorations and parked cars signalling that people are around. Passing through one estate DeAngelis points out where the Chief Insp lives, and he jokes that it looks good if they're seen conducting patrol here. At around 1815, DeAngelis hints that we'll make our way back to the station. (Obs 14 – 14/12/17)

The idea that the conventional situational closure constructed by the vehicle creates a barrier to informal police-public focused interaction is reinforced by an outward assessment of the officers 'involvement within the situation' when they are travelling in a police vehicle. In the presence of others, even when no spoken communication

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is required, individuals are still communicating information in the form of socially recognised non-verbal signs, consisting of 'bodily appearance and personal acts', that speak to the allocation of their involvement (Goffman, 1963, p.33). From a partial awareness that their activity is on display for all those around them to perceive, persons can alter their behaviour in line with social expectations to present in certain ways in particular situations; they may modify their activity to 'employ it with its public character in mind' (Goffman, 1963, p.33-35). Since assessing involvement comprises a reading of unfocused interaction, the 'actual involvement' of a person is not as important as their 'effective involvement', namely 'the involvement that the actor and the others sense that he is maintaining, or sense he is (or might be) sensed to be maintaining' (Goffman, 1963, p.38). Consequently, officers in a vehicle will be conveying information, from their facial expressions to their physical gestures, to those in their immediate surroundings about the way they are managing their situated activities.

Thinking about the aforementioned fieldwork patrol examples, the signs observable to a bystander might be the presence of uniformed officers travelling in a moving police vehicle; the tendency for said persons to be looking directly ahead or focusing on something or someone specific; intermittent conversation between those inside the vehicle; and said persons using their radios or other handheld devices. All of these activities could be perceived as on duty police officers occupied with a policing related task in hand. The onlooker will, in all probability, not know what the task is that concerns the officers, the content of their talk or the nature of their radio usage, however the movements nevertheless gesture at policing in action. Persons dressed in police uniform travelling in a police vehicle appearing engrossed through their facial expressions and use of equipment can fulfil an unknowing member of the public's conception of officers engaging in policing activity; they are displaying 'properly occasioned activity' (Goffman, 1963, p.36). Of course, in some instances, the officers will be engaged in a specific task that has arisen during their patrol or one that also requires the use of patrol. Still, at the times when they are solely conducting patrol and nothing work-related is absorbing their full attention, the

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officers are potentially communicating the same non-verbal information indicative of them being fully engaged in a specific policing task.

The notion that officers in a vehicle, whether they are fully absorbed in a task related to patrol or not, are still able to affect appropriate involvement indicates the potential for the vehicle to act as a barrier to perception by shielding the officers' involvement within the situation, otherwise known as an 'involvement shield' (Goffman, 1963, p.39). For officers, the protection afforded by the vehicle can facilitate them talking informally and potentially portraying a self they would not in a professional capacity reveal in their direct dealings with the public. In this way, the involvement shield permits them to temporarily 'break role' (Goffman, 1963, p.40). Furthermore, the shelter of the vehicle can serve as a means for officers to affect appropriate involvement when they are not fully motivated by the task in hand; they can maintain an impression of 'proper involvement' in police work (Goffman, 1963, p.41). Given that the actual involvement maintained by an individual within a situation is based on their internal intents, it is not possible nor is it within the scope of the research to suggest the specific motivations of officers other than to show the communicative components that can arise from and influence their ways of working.

For members of the public, the portable involvement shield sustained by the vehicle can potentially create the appearance that officers are occupied in policing related activity and cannot be stopped on a whim for a non-urgent matter or a casual chat. In most instances, at the very moment when this possible assessment of the officers' involvement within the situation is combined with the conventional situational closure created by the vehicle, it could be argued that the perceiver has no other information available to them to confirm, disprove or alter their review of the situation (unless they have prior knowledge or there are additional signs in the wider situation to indicate the nature of the officers' work, for example a road traffic accident). Consequently, a set of circumstances is created whereby the conventional situational closure and involvement shield constructed by the vehicle results in a lack of impetus for informal dialogue that would, amongst other outcomes, allow a fuller understanding of the visible presence the officers are trying to establish. This is

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clearly illustrated in the below fieldnote where even the opportunity for the officers and residents to initiate focused interaction with each other is not acted upon.

During vehicle patrol in the afternoon, PCs Carmella and Gabriella agree to travel to a residential area in Morcoast where a burglary had occurred the previous evening. Entering a cul-de-sac of large, detached houses, the van moves slowly up the road as both officers try to figure out which house was burgled. Gradually returning down the road a resident standing outside her front door follows the vehicle with her eyes indicating (to me) a curiosity about the police presence. A little further on, another resident walking along the pavement glances over. The officers continue with their discussion and decide that the end house is the one that was burgled. Gabriella briefly stops the vehicle as both officers survey the house in question and comment on the factors that may have made it susceptible to being burgled before driving on. (Obs 10 – 16/11/2017)

The analysis of vehicle patrol has illustrated, using Goffman's concepts of conventional situational closure and involvement, the way in which the interactional space of the police vehicle has the potential to limit the amount and type of focused interaction officers experience with the public to a few formal verbal exchanges. It has highlighted how the police vehicle does not outright stop contact with the public, especially as there will always be unfocused interaction taking place, but it can act as a barrier to perception. In this way, the non-verbal information conveyed to bystanders about the allocation of the officers' involvement within the situation is likely to suggest that they are giving concerted attention to a policing activity in hand even if this is not the case and they are not available for informal contact. The identified obstacles to focused interaction brought about by the police vehicle questions the extent to which the police can establish a meaningful visible presence in an area and develop a dialogue with people. In contrast, the foot patrol conducted by PCSOs can be seen to create a different type of police presence that can overcome some of the communicative barriers associated with the use of a vehicle.

Foot Patrol

To consider the communicative features of PCSO foot patrol presence, this section will firstly explore how the context of the street contrasted with the road creates the basis for focused interaction. PCSOs walking around the public space take on the role of pedestrians. They move across roads and streets to get from one place to another, and in combination with members of the public present at that time, they form 'street traffic'. In essence, PCSOs, like all other pedestrians, are what Goffman (2010) describes as a type of 'vehicular unit'. They are human navigators, so to speak, subject to 'traffic codes' that allow them to move around independently and avoid collision or obstruction (Goffman, 2010, p.6). Street traffic is controlled by pedestrians use of techniques to take note of each other and plot a route that avoids collision (Goffman, 2010, p.6 and p.11). These regulatory methods consist of 'externalization' whereby one intentionally uses 'over-all body gesture' to make information about their 'direction, rate and resoluteness of proposed course' available to others, and 'scanning' which simply involves checking the movements of the persons in one's immediate walking area (Goffman, 2010, p.11). Essentially, externalization and scanning are interpersonal devices that involve pedestrians 'eyeing each other' to assess and manoeuvre their way through their surroundings on foot. The interplay of these subtle everyday practices on the street highlights the continuous focused contact that takes place between persons in each other's presence who are not or need not be acquainted. Both techniques not only form fundamental processes in day-to-day street interaction, but they demonstrate the understated means through which PCSOs on foot can be visible to those around them without engaging in explicit encounters with persons.

PCSOs on foot by their mere role as pedestrians are physically visible in a way they might not be on the roads. A pedestrian will most likely notice a PCSO walking or standing in their immediate or approaching surroundings as it is pertinent to them mapping out an unobstructed walking route. However, a pedestrian might not notice officers in a moving police vehicle on the road in the same way unless their attention

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turns to the road, for example to cross it. Similarly, a road user might not interact with a police vehicle as they would as a pedestrian. The navigation of a road vehicular unit provides the opportunity for, and sometimes involves, eye-to-eye contact between drivers, and drivers and pedestrians, but it does not necessarily take place with the same necessity or regularity. Drivers are largely guided by scanning other vehicles; following physical indicators, like road markings and traffic lights; and applying formal rules, including the highway code; all of which, it could be argued, lack the communicative connection between persons that takes place in street traffic. Moreover, the regulation of street traffic largely involves a 'voluntary coordination of action' between persons, often strangers, through which 'mutual trust' is exhibited (Goffman, 2010, p.17). Two pedestrians approaching each other are required to provide one another with information that they are following an appropriate route to avoid collision and by keeping to their obligations to one another trust is sustained between them (Goffman, 2010, p.18). As a result, the implicit shared bond between pedestrians on the street can be more meaningful than that of passing vehicles, and for PCSOs on foot, it provides an opportunity to be a part of this interactional occurrence.

On the surface, these subtle differences between the road and street may seem insignificant, especially when applied to police patrol work. Yet, it is this very nuance between the two settings that provides the foundation on which the potential communicative gains of foot patrol are constructed. The unbounded and pedestrianised nature of foot patrol allows PCSOs and persons in their immediate presence to engage in unplanned contact of a kind that facilitates a 'special communication licence' between them to potentially bring about different types of focused interaction (Goffman, 1963, p.83). The communicative possibilities exhibited by PCSOs on foot will be set out below to show how their visible presence on the street can create forms of focused interaction, however trivial in character, that can establish an expressive association between the auxiliaries and public capable of bringing about a type of community engagement (Goffman, 1963, p.83).

Glancing

Building on the notion of PCSOs as vehicular units navigating a walking route on the street, the interpersonal act of ‘glancing’ is one that often routinely and unintentionally takes place between persons both known and unknown to each other in passing in the public space. The act itself may seem quite inconsequential, but when differences in how glancing is performed are considered, its overall relevance to interaction can be perceived. For instance, in its extreme form, glancing can be executed as a fixed stare accompanied by a facial expression reacting to the observed, for example a look of disdain (Goffman, 1963, p.83). Alternatively, glancing can be outright avoided to purposely ‘not see’ a person; a kind of ‘non-person treatment’ of those deemed underserving of attention (Goffman, 1963, p.83). What becomes evident through these instances is that glancing serves an important communicative function between people by offering a non-verbal means of surveying who is around, gathering information about those who are observable and exhibiting a reaction to their attendance. It is an initial way of assessing the environment around us, and in terms of both ‘seeing’ or ‘not seeing’ PCSOs when they are conducting patrol, glancing can bring about some form of acknowledgement of their presence.

Civil Inattention

While glancing is often inexplicit in that persons do not necessarily have to engage in face-to-face contact and it can take place without the knowledge of those present, most situations entail a more ‘proper’ form of recognition between people as exemplified in the below extract.

Adriana and Furio finish a home visit and they indicate that they are going to take a walk around the area. We follow the residential road until we approach open parkland. Going through the park, we pass a small play area occupied by a

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number of adults and toddlers. The PCSOs acknowledge a couple of passers-by as we proceed along the path. (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

The impromptu contact triggered by the PCSOs 'acknowledging' a couple of people in passing can be alternatively understood as the auxiliaries according members of the public 'civil inattention'. Civil inattention is described as occurring when a person, mutually present to another person and not engaged in any focused interaction with them, gives them enough momentary visual attention to show that they acknowledge their presence before withdrawing their gaze (Goffman, 1963, p.84). The eyes of each person might meet as each gives the other sufficient notice to admit that they have seen the other, but each avoids prolonging their observance to show that the other does not attract any need for further attention (Goffman, 1963, p.84). The fleeting exchange of glances allows the observer and observed to reciprocally inform the other that they accept and are unperturbed by their presence. It forms a courteous signal between persons that there is no reason for apprehension, antagonism or evasion; there is no ill-feeling among them (Goffman, 1963, p.84). In doing so, the persons present extend a treatment to each other that shows them to be a participant in the gathering in turn creating a mutual sense of calm and unity (Goffman, 1963, p.86). Civil inattention tacitly reinforces to others that they are behaving in a manner considered acceptable; 'propriety on the individual's part tends to ensure him being accorded civil inattention' (Goffman, 1963, p.87). Of course, there are times when those behaving improperly are still accorded civil inattention, although to a lesser extent, to diplomatically negotiate the scene and maintain a façade of social stability (Goffman, 1963, p.87).

Civil inattention is the 'slightest of interpersonal rituals' that consistently occurs in everyday interaction and provides a means of regulating conduct between persons without direct verbal dialogue (Goffman 1963, p.84). For PCSOs on foot patrol, the use of civil inattention emphasises how the auxiliaries are not walking around in a vacuum. The boundless area around them allows for close contact with the public through which they can actively engage in mutual glances that contribute to the daily regulation of the public space, possibly strengthened by the PCSOs representing an

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authoritative presence. Thinking more specially about the worth of civil inattention to foot patrol, the practice serves a number of distinctive communicative functions, including facilitating orderliness, conveying information and initiating face encounters, each of which will be considered below to show how they can be complemented by a PCSO presence.

Facilitating Orderliness

As we approach the parade of shops, Adriana recognises a housing worker exiting the small supermarket and they catch-up with one another. During the conversation, Adriana is slightly distracted by some shouting and she glances across the road to where the sound is originating. I look over too and see a small group stood in the front garden of a property behaving loudly, but it doesn't seem hostile. Some of the group catch sight of Adriana staring in their direction and this seems to quieten them. Adriana returns to the conversation. (Obs 7 – 24/10/17)

Adriana briefly staring at the noisy group appears to act as a 'negative sanction' to control their conduct (Goffman, 1963, p.88). In what transpires, it seems that the group catch sight of Adriana's prolonged gaze and note that their loud behaviour has attracted her attention. To possibly avoid an escalation in her response to them, maybe related to her authoritative status, they calm down. Civil inattention implemented in this way can serve as an initial and final warning to others that they are acting 'improperly' and provide them with the opportunity to alter their conduct. It offers a subtle, and often less provocative, means of establishing social stability without the overt display of a reprimand. However, it could be contended that in the field extract on page 128, the use of civil inattention by PCs Artie and Junior as they drive past a male is actually quite confrontational as indicated by the male antagonistically staring back at them. In the aforesaid instance, it seems that the male responding by staring at the officers materialises as 'a sanction against [their] staring' (Goffman, 1963, p.88). On the one hand, the incident points to the complexities of human interaction where the nature of relationships, personal

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histories and experiences undoubtedly impact on how individuals execute and receive communicative acts like civil inattention. Consequently, in some circumstances, there is the potential to incite some form of disorder as opposed to establish order. While on the other, the instance highlights the potential effect of the interactional space on how a communicative act is delivered and accepted by the persons involved. A slow-moving police vehicle with officers inside staring at a person from a short distance away for the duration of their passing can be seen to make a different statement to officers in the street briefly staring over to a person before resuming their business.

To begin with, for the officers to be able to afford civil inattention from within the vehicle to those outside, it has to be stationary or moving slowly, and as the previous section suggests, the presence of a vehicle can create a barrier. Subsequently, when trying to execute focused interaction, like that of civil inattention, through the barrier of the vehicle, it can create a more explicit authoritative expression; uniformed officers in a marked police vehicle positioned directly in front of a person is potentially more intrusive and noticeable to both the person targeted and bystanders. Likewise, the perimeter of the vehicle, as indicated earlier, in creating the impression that the officers are inaccessible may lead to the receiver of such an act interpreting it more forcefully. Accordingly, the person might be more inclined to challenge it, especially if it is believed the officers in question will be less likely to retaliate due to their perceived unapproachability. When considered in this way, the use of civil inattention from the position of foot patrol, especially when employed to subtly reprimand others, can be seen to be more inconspicuous and integrated with the flow of street traffic.

Conveying Information

During the latter part of the morning, Frank proceeds on foot to patrol in and around Seawynne town centre. We follow the canal path round to an adjoining road. On the pavement, Frank looks around, stands still and waits until the only other people in the immediate vicinity, two females chatting with shopping

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bags, make their way past us. Frank glances at them as they walk by and we set off a short distance behind [Part 1].

Later in the shift, Frank and Vincent are manning the 'mobile police station' in the town centre. A male approaches Frank as he is strolling around the outside entrance of the station and reports the smell of burning on the other side of the street. The PCSOs follow him over to a telephone junction box encircled by a small cloud of smoke. Two shop staff who are standing examining the box retreat when they see the PCSOs coming. Some members of the public in the distance peer over as Frank inspects down the back of the box and identifies a discarded lit cigarette. Vincent passes Frank a pint of water he has acquired from the public house opposite and Frank pours it over the affected area. The smoke ceases and the people in the surrounding area return to their business. [Part 2] (Obs 9 – 06/11/17)

Civil inattention signals information between persons that feeds into their assessments of their immediate environment allowing them to sense potential threats and opportunities to navigate or avoid. In day-to-day life people tend to negotiate between the state of being 'tranquil', i.e., calmly carrying out routine activities, and 'fully mobilised', i.e., distressed, geared up to abscond or confront, by constantly, and in the main instinctively, checking their surroundings through communicative means, like that of civil inattention, for signs of 'alarm' (Goffman, 2010, p.238-239). At times when nothing unusual occurs and an individual can attend to their daily business at ease and without issue, they will sense an ordinary state of affairs. In these circumstances, as Goffman (2010, p.239) describes, 'appearances are "natural" or "normal"' indicating a degree of safety and stability in the immediate environment. Relatedly, there are times when something may occur, or someone may behave in an untoward way, but it does not necessarily cause the individual to directly feel alarmed, and they will continue as they were.

In human gatherings, people gauge whether something is wrong in their 'umwelt', that is the immediate region around them in which signs for alarm can emanate and sources of alarm can be situated, from two occurrences (Goffman, 2010, p.253-254).

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Firstly, they perceive 'signs of being alarmed' from others, typically from their sound and appearance showing some form of distress. Secondly, they pick up on the signals given by those in a specialised role, like that of the police, tasked with keeping guard, warning the public and dealing with the source of alarm (Goffman, 2010, p.244-247). With this in mind, the presence of PCSOs on foot in public has the potential to be beneficial to the everyday occurrence of civil inattention taking place between people by positively feeding into their perceptions and understandings of their immediate surroundings. The two parts of the above extract highlight two distinct ways in which civil inattention involving PCSOs can possibly assist in reducing a sense of alarm.

Firstly, as illustrated in Part 1, by making his presence known to the passing public through purposely standing in their eyeline for civil inattention to take place, Frank shows the potential for PCSOs to effect 'normal appearances'. In making a point of being noticed on patrol through affording members of the public civil inattention Frank has the potential to create for them a perception of safety. Generally, when in the presence of others, tacit information about their 'social and personal identity, intents and ... [purposes] and information about [their] social relationships to others present...' is what one expects to be sufficiently available to determine whether or not they should be alarmed by them (Goffman, 2010, p.304). In the case of Frank, it will be discernible by his uniform that he is a police representative and for some, this information will signify safety and security, and may create a sense of reassurance as he can easily be called upon if a source of alarm directly affects them or takes place in their immediate vicinity.

PCSOs will most likely be very visible in a person's *umwelt* because they are accorded a 'special status' due to their role involving maintenance of social order and an obligation to respond to requests from the public when something is wrong (Goffman, 2010, p.307). At the same time, the presence of individuals, like PCSOs, tasked with upholding the peace in the public space are often of little interest to others. Beyond registering that they are there, the public are likely to see no reason to concern themselves with the auxiliaries, as is the case in part 1, when the passing

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pedestrians continue on their way. Accordingly, Goffman (2010, p.307) highlights how there is a tendency for 'stocked characters', like PCSOs, who have a 'freedom to be present' to be treated as 'non-persons, mere background figures' by users of the street. In this way, PCSOs being afforded non-person treatment indicates, in a lot of instances, a tacit acceptance of their role and an understated sense of reassurance from their mere presence. The aforesaid occurrence of civil inattention also starts to open out understanding of how a visible presence functions in community engagement by illustrating how PCSO patrol work can establish a type of reciprocal unplanned and tacit contact with the public that can be reassuring.

Secondly, as exemplified in Part 2 of the extract, in responding to an on-the-spot report of burning the PCSOs' actions demonstrate how they can de-escalate perceived unease in the event of something or someone causing alarm. Frank and Vincent in actively dealing with and eliminating the source of alarm they are alerted to, by someone Frank engages in civil inattention, has the potential to generate a sense of protection. This perception is not only conveyed to the participant of the gathering, in this example the male who reported the incident, but to the bystanders to the gathering, in this instance the shop staff and onlookers, who are able to 'learn something about the encounter's participants and to be affected by how the encounter as a whole is conducted' (Goffman, 1963, p.154). The focused and unfocused interaction, including the use of civil inattention, between all those present, will potentially lead to them acquiring 'reassuring information' from the PCSOs management of the situation. It will allow them to infer that the cause for alarm is false and lead to, as was described in Part 2, their concentration on the matter 'decay[ing] quickly' (Goffman, 2010, p.262).

In addition to reducing a sense of alarm at that moment in time, the potential information signalled from the positive actions of the PCSOs could have a longer-term impact on the persons present. In Part 2, the conduct of Frank and Vincent could also be seen to affirm their role in maintaining community safety. This is an insight which could form positive 'identificatory information' about the auxiliaries for the persons present in turn contributing to how they consider and approach PCSOs in the

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future. For example, the persons may be more likely to think of the PCSOs as providing a positive contribution to policing or to approach the auxiliaries if they require assistance. Indeed, people take enough notice of ‘properly behaved’ passers-by in the street to obtain and remember ‘a lot of identificatory information’ about them that they can then utilise to initiate future contact with them (Goffman, 2010, p.323). Therefore, it could be argued that the identificatory information persons acquire from a figure with ‘special status’, like that of PCSOs, acting in a situation that draws their attention is potentially more profound. Again, it is another example of how PCSOs in their daily duties on foot can potentially establish meaningful contact with the wider public without directly addressing them.

Initiating Face Engagements

Furio and Adriana walk along a couple of streets until they reach a small row of shops set down from the road. There are a couple of males standing by a railing. The PCSOs glance at them as they pass by and one of the males in their eyeline says, ‘morning’ while the other laughs correcting him, ‘it’s afternoon’. The PCSOs smile at both men and walk on. [No 1] (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

Carmine stops and looks around after hearing his name being called from behind. A young male runs towards us and Carmine cheerfully says hello in a tone of voice that suggests he knows him. The male informs Carmine that his nana passed away and Carmine passes on his regards to the male and his family before asking some general questions about the male’s circumstances. The exchange soon comes to a close and we walk on. [No 2] (Obs 13 – 07/12/17)

Meadow glances over to an elderly male holding a walking stick unsteadily making his way up a garden path. She asks him if he’s alright to which he replies that he is struggling. She checks to see if he needs any help and he light-heartedly states that he’s 91 so that’s why he’s struggling! Adriana joins them, and they have a brief chat about how he is getting on and if he’s experiencing any problems in the area. [No 3] (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

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Eye-to-eye looks play an important role in the ‘communication life of the community’ – they create an openness between persons that facilitates focused interaction (Goffman, 1963, p.92). When the PCSOs were mutually engaged in civil inattention with the public, it often increased both parties’ approachability to enter a verbal encounter with the other, in the form of a ‘greeting’ or ‘chat’. In some instances, the exchange encompassed a non-instrumental rationale with a simple salutation and/or gesture marking the start and finish of the interaction. While the occurrence of such ‘social contact’ between PCSOs and the public may appear trivial, it can be seen to serve as a ‘positive interpersonal ritual’ that strengthens the message of consensus initially conveyed through civil inattention. In everyday encounters brief interpersonal rituals of a positive and negative nature form an embedded and routine structure for exchanges between persons (Goffman, 2010, p.64). In regard to a positive interpersonal ritual, Goffman (2010, p.63) draws on the work of Durkheim (Durkheim, Cosman and Cladis, 2001) to describe it as a practice entailing a performer providing a type of ‘offering’ that signals ‘involvement in’ and ‘connectedness to’ another. In response, the recipient shows some form of acknowledgement and appreciation of the offering, which confirms the existence of the relationship implied by the performer’s actions and demonstrates regard for the performer as a person (Goffman, 2010, p.63). Therefore, when persons are present to each other, the dialogic process of performing a ritual offering and receiving a show of approval forms ‘a little ceremony – a supportive interchange’ that affirms and supports the social relationship between them (Goffman, 2010, p.64).

The supportive interchanges, in this case represented by the face engagements initiated by PCSOs and the public to each other through civil inattention, can be seen to feature and function in ways that can attest to a constructive police-public relationship and provide the foundations on which the auxiliaries can develop a dialogue with people. In most instances during the field work, the supportive interchanges between the PCSOs and public took place unexpectedly with each party independently happening upon the other in the course of using the same streets, establishments or public transport (Goffman, 2010, p.71). In terms of the costs involved in arranging and executing this type of interaction, specifically the amount

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of time it occupied, the financial expense it generated and the physical and emotional effort it required, this particular 'base of contact' entailed minimal personal sacrifice (Goffman, 2010, p.72). For both PCSOs and the public, it occurred during their daily routines with less expectations on them to act in a way that would be anticipated if a formal planned contact had been arranged. For example, if a public meeting had been organised by the PCSOs, the invited persons would be required to attend a specified venue at a certain time and afford their attention and/or make a contribution. Accordingly, the fortuitous low-cost circumstances and minimal undertaking involved in this type of contact created an informal openness that could be seen to increase the likelihood of, and potentially frequency of, 'greeting behaviour' between PCSOs and the public.

Greetings, as described by Goffman (2010, p.74), typically take the form of positive expressions of social recognition (for example, smiling and eyes glistening) and/or physical gestures (for instance, waving and nodding) usually accompanied by a verbal salutation. Generally, greetings are characterised by expressions and feelings of 'pleasure' and 'delight' between people in one another's presence and they offer a type of positive assurance to their relationships with each other (Goffman, 2010, p.74). On the one hand, the innocuous, low-cost and spontaneous nature of greetings can be considered a trivial event, especially as the circumstances of such interaction means there is a high likelihood that contact between the same PCSOs and members of the public will not take place regularly, unless their routines continue to accidentally collide (Goffman, 2010, p.72). Furthermore, the length and content of a 'greeting-like ritual' between newly acquainted persons is normally likely to be 'light' as relations between them have barely formed for anything more intense to be accepted (Goffman, 2010, p.90). However, when greeting practices are analysed in more depth, it becomes apparent how they can provide a functional and meaningful device for PCSOs to connect with the public.

There are 'passing greetings' that, in the context of the PCSO-public interaction, act as 'social recognition rituals' whereby the PCSOs and public come across and acknowledge each other in the course of their daily activities without pausing. Field

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extract 1 is a clear example of a passing greeting between the PCSOs and public in which the two parties briefly give each other a welcoming sign. These displays between persons can represent a friendly show of approval that point towards the individuals involved positively accepting and allowing each other to occupy and move through the same physical space (Goffman, 2010, p.74). They build on the sense of trust and safety expressed through the initial exchange of civil inattention by physically gesturing and/or verbally confirming that no bad intent exists. Similarly, the use of smiles, also demonstrated in fieldnote 1, occupy an important role in interaction. In the context of the PCSOs smiling at the public they come across, they can serve a number of purposes for the auxiliaries, including a form of acknowledgement to the everyday social situation both parties are involved in, a silent gesture of gratitude or a means of communicating good intentions to those around them (Goffman, 2010, p.160). In addition to the passing greeting, there may be times when PCSOs and members of the public know each other and unexpectedly come across one another during their routines. In these circumstances, a 'surprise greeting' may take place similar to that outlined in fieldnote 2 (Goffman, 2010, p.76). Here the exchange is slightly more prolonged than the passing greeting with a brief chat between the two persons occurring. Despite the unforeseen nature of the contact, as Carmine shows, effort is taken to adjust to the circumstances and demonstrate 'mutual consideration' (Goffman, 2010, p.76).

While passing and surprise greetings transpire slightly differently, their structure is similar as they possess a 'maintenance' quality (Goffman, 2010, p.76). In both cases, the coming together of each party sets up, and in doing so implicitly guarantees, contact between them. As a result, the performance of these brief supportive interchanges maintains relations between persons whether that be in a civil way for those unacquainted or a more considerate manner for those acquainted. Furthermore, where passing or surprise greetings may ordinarily take the form of a momentary and inconsequential cordial occurrence, the presence of a PCSO has the potential to make it more meaningful. A passing greeting performed to a PCSO can act as a form of assent to their status as a policing representative, in other words, the public in greeting the auxiliaries are recognising their role and showing a degree

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of conformity to what it symbolises (Goffman, 2010, p.74). Similarly, a passing greeting extended by a PCSO to a member of the public can function as showing regard for their positioning as someone the auxiliaries serve. Taken together the meanings associated with a greeting combined with its reciprocal nature can create a mutual demonstration of appreciation and cooperation between PCSOs and the public that builds or reinforces relations between them.

Besides fulfilling a sociable function that can represent a welcoming demonstration of approval and trust, a greeting can also allow the PCSOs to gauge how they are received by those around them or gain a sense of whether an individual is experiencing difficulty. Generally, if a greeting expressed by a person is not returned in the same manner as it was delivered or not responded to at all, it can indicate that 'something is wrong' as it is anticipated that the initial offering will be, and often spontaneously, repaid by the receiver (Goffman, 2010, p.75). For PCSOs, this type of response could point to the receiver of the greeting taking issue with the auxiliaries or experiencing a problem impacting upon their ability to reciprocate appropriately. Either way, it offers a potential opportunity for intervention by the PCSOs to improve relations with the individual or assist them in some way. Field extract 3 illustrates one such instance where the response to a passing greeting acted as a sign to Meadow to inquire for more information. In this instance, the reasoning behind the male's response was light-hearted, however it triggered an extended face encounter that might otherwise not have taken place and it was a constructive exchange for the PCSOs in regard to acquainting themselves with another person and his experience of the neighbourhood. Accordingly, the function of a greeting can extend beyond symbolism to offering the means to directly connect with people for a notable period of time (in comparison to a glance or gesture).

Typically, the extension of a greeting carves out a 'time-person slot' that marks a phase of increased access between participants (Goffman, 2010, p.77 and p.80). For PCSOs this type of access offers two opportunities – it opens the channels of communication for further talk, and it allows the auxiliaries 'to enter into a personal relationship' with the people involved (Goffman, 2010, p.77 and p.79). Fieldnotes 2

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and 3 show how salutations can increase communicative access for 'chats' to develop, that is individuals pausing in their 'separate lines of action for [...] a brief period of time' (Goffman, 1963, p.101). A passing greeting is identified as the exception to this convention, particularly between the unacquainted, due to the transitory nature of the contact that occurs resulting in the increased access between the participants only existing in principle (Goffman, 2010, p.79). However, to specify all the roles and positions of greetings in face encounters is difficult given that they are 'complex' and 'variable', and for PCSOs with their 'built-in license' to approach and receive others, it could be argued that any type of greeting offered or received by the auxiliaries to both the acquainted and unacquainted has the potential to develop into a face engagement (Goffman, 1963, p.129; Goffman, 2010, p.76). Indeed, Goffman (2010, p.83) also points out that greetings are receptive to the 'kind of ritual licence binding the performers', and in regard to policing representatives like PCSOs, it is customary that any advance made by them or to them is received. At the same time the ease with which social contact, like that of a greeting and chat, can potentially occur when it involves someone with recognised status like a PCSO cannot be assumed to be a straightforward communicative move for the auxiliaries. To highlight some of the complexity of exhibiting increased access for face-to-face interaction, two points of consideration arose for PCSOs in their initiation and receipt of unplanned encounters.

Firstly, the appropriateness of entering into talk was a factor that sometimes featured in PCSOs' assessments of the people they came across. Generally, in circumstances where unacquainted persons come together 'the obligation to keep one's distance' is a key thought to avoid acting in an overly intrusive, and by implication situationally improper, manner (Goffman, 2010, p.91). Similarly, people use the public space in the knowledge that their availability will not be taken advantage of by others resulting in the expectation that contact will be initiated 'only under circumstances that [they] will easily see to be justified' (Goffman, 1963, p.106). Technically for PCSOs with their intrinsic authority to make claims of others, it could be contended that thinking about the level of intrusion they exercise in social contact is not relevant as a degree of imposition into the routines of the people they happen

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upon is an expected part of their role. However, an equally important aspect is building rapport with local people, and to be able to fulfil this communicative function, it could be argued that the auxiliaries are required to utilise skills to navigate their connectedness to the people, both acquainted and unacquainted, that they encounter to circumvent alienating them or themselves. Consequently, there were times when PCSOs demonstrated using their awareness of the information being given out and given off by people to execute care in how they approached them for focused interaction to avoid any type of invasiveness. In the below field extract, Frank shows and discusses how he negotiates communication boundaries with people who are potentially very conscious of his authoritative status and wary of contact with him in public.

At the top of the high street, Frank states that he can see a female he knows, and whom he is aware uses drugs, heading in our direction. We pass the female as we're crossing the road and Frank acknowledges her. While continuing to walk purposefully past us she asks Frank if he has seen [name of a person] and Frank replies that he hasn't seen them. The female carries on down the street and Frank comments that he didn't try to engage her further because she seemed to be preoccupied and in a hurry. As we walk on, Frank describes being aware that some people with drug and alcohol addictions who spend a lot of time in public places are often distrustful and suspicious of him. He explains that he tries to show them that he wants to work with them and will not act in a way that might disaffect them. He tries to avoid making it obvious that he knows them or proceeding to talk to them in front of others unless they speak to him first or indicate in advance that they are happy for him to approach them. (Obs 9 – 06/11/17)

Secondly, the ease with which the PCSOs could be called upon seemed to influence how the auxiliaries received members of the public when approached by them. Often the auxiliaries would limit the linguistic and expressive information they conveyed to persons in the opening phases of the face engagement. Goffman (2010, p.87), referring to the 'period of easier contact' created by a greeting, draws attention to participants constraining their interest at the start of a face encounter to prevent

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giving a ‘misleading indication’ of what is likely to happen. It is in the beginning stages when participants are more available to one another that there is the opportunity for their level of involvement in and connectedness to each other to be realised (Goffman, 2010, p.87). Accordingly, the need to manage expectations through structuring the interaction in a particular way, specifically when face engagements were initiated by others, could be seen as a way for the PCSOs to avoid signalling the wrong impression about what the face engagement might entail. To illustrate, the field extract below provides an example of the PCSOs restricting their reaction to a female’s request until they gain a full sense of what she requires from them.

A female approaches the PCSOs, greets them and asks if she can get their advice. Salvatore and Carlo both say ‘yes’ and pause allowing the female to speak. She states that a mechanic she believed worked at a local car garage collected her vehicle from her address for repair. Since then, she has been unable to contact the mechanic or ascertain the location of the garage causing her concern. The female asks the PCSOs if they know where the business is located and if this set of circumstances constitutes a crime. Both PCSOs express having not heard of the garage or where it could be situated, and Salvatore suggests that it is possible a crime has been committed. He goes on to advise that she report the matter to 101 if she is unable to locate the mechanic and retrieve her vehicle. The female agrees and thanks the PCSOs before walking away. (Obs 6 – 16/10/17)

The fieldnote highlights how the communicative accessibility of the PCSOs can lead to the public easily approaching them for reasons they will not be aware of until they engage in talk, and this can involve people making claims of them that are outside their mandate. On the one hand, it might be argued that the handling of public expectations, especially when they go beyond the PCSO remit, can be negotiated by the auxiliaries through talk. Indeed, Salvatore demonstrates how advice and guidance can be still provided to the public in the event that the auxiliaries are unable to directly assist with the issue. While on the other, the PCSOs also show how the way in which they structure their initial interchanges with people, specifically when they receive overtures from others, goes some way to setting the tone for what can

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be expected of them. In the field extract, Salvatore and Carlo accept the female's request for further talk, but they do not reciprocate with offerings or express 'increased closeness or involvement' straightaway (Goffman, 2010, p.87). Instead, they pause to understand the nature of the female's contact before providing a response. In doing so, the auxiliaries avoid creating 'burdensome anticipations' at the beginning of the interaction that they might be unable to meet (Goffman, 2010, p.87). For instance, they do not take the lead in talk and potentially give the impression that they can actively deal with or resolve whatever is presented to them. The two aforementioned considerations bring to light how the initiation and receipt of a face engagement are distinctive aspects of social contact that can require skilful manoeuvre by the PCSOs to create a constructive perception and experience of them.

Chapter 5

High Police Visibility

Building on the interactional features of foot patrol and how they can function to support and create the foundations for community engagement highlighted in Chapter 4, this chapter will analyse in more detail the nature of the focused interaction and the different functions it serves to show how it can develop the two-way dialogue and better understanding of communities that has been identified as integral to NPTs' community engagement work. By exploring unplanned face engagements, the accessibility of PCSOs in public and the process and type of acquaintanceship they can foster with people, it will be demonstrated how the auxiliaries can cultivate high visibility in their patrol presence to deliver community engagement.

Unplanned Face Engagements

The initiation of unplanned face engagements from the extension of civil inattention and greeting behaviours between PCSOs and the public often created the opportunity for them to be available to one another for further talk. These encounters took the form of 'conversations' where the persons present became physically and facially oriented towards each other, and a 'single focus of attention' on a speaker and subject matter materialised (Goffman, 1963, p.95-96). While the single focus of attention could change from one speaker to another and from one subject to another, what could be seen to emerge in most instances was a joint understanding of the situation between the PCSOs and public. Goffman (1963, p.96) refers to the formation of a 'shared definition' in a conversational encounter as including 'agreement concerning perceptual relevancies and irrelevancies', and a 'working consensus involving a degree of mutual considerateness.' It is this resulting state of 'mutual participation' embodied in the shared activity of conversation that provided the PCSOs and public with a type of collaborative bond or, as Goffman terms it, a 'we-rationale' (Goffman, 1963, p.98 and p.100). The below field extracts

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provide a sample of the different forms mutual participation assumed between the PCSOs and public in the unplanned face encounters.

Social Closeness and Relatedness

Adriana and Furio turn into a housing estate. Straightaway a group of three young girls, aged around 10, head towards us, and one shouts Adriana's name running up to her. Adriana asks the girl how she is, and the girl replies querying if Adriana has heard about the death of her brother. As the girl is re-joined by her two friends, she points out that one of them has let her use her handbag, and Adriana complements it. Adriana, pointing to a bottle of sparkly hand gel attached to her vest, asks the girl if she would like some. The girl agrees, and Adriana applies a small amount to her hand and points out the glitter. The other girls agree to have some too. The main girl turns her attention to Furio and asks him about a small figurine dangling from one of his pens. Furio points out the other badges on his vest and says that he will be able to get her one too. The girl, whispering, asks Furio if he's also heard about her brother before running back to her two friends. Adriana and Furio say goodbye. (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

Support and Assistance

Germani turns off the main high street down a side passage and looks directly at a dishevelled female sitting on the ground. The female glances back at Germani and he walks over to her. The female's dog excitedly jumps up as the female, now standing, appears agitated and asserts that she is not begging. Germani tries to reassure her that he is here to find out if she is okay and if he can offer any help. They enter into a conversation about her circumstances in which the female talks about what led to her being homeless, other personal problems and recent threats from a couple of males. Germani informs her that he is going to record some details to make sure she has the right support in place. He takes note of her personal information telling her that he will be referring her onto an accommodation outreach team and logging her report of being threatened. The female seems accepting of Germani's response and we say bye. (Obs 11 – 28/11/17)

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Intelligence Gathering

Heading in the direction of the town centre with Frank and Vincent, an untidy looking male, who I am later informed is a drug user known to them, walks towards us. As we get closer, Frank and the male acknowledge each other. Frank stops and greets the male before indicating to us that he is going to chat with him. Vincent and I continue walking to give them some privacy. Not long after, Frank comes over the radio and informs Vincent that the male has disclosed some important intelligence to him, and he is planning to return to the police station to input the information on the system. (Obs 9 – 06/11/17)

Preventing and Addressing Low-Level Crime and Disorder

Walking down a residential street, Montisanti and Melfi pass a male trying to tape a broken wing mirror to a car. The PCSOs acknowledge him, and he comments, sounding frustrated, that local youths damaged the wing mirror. Montisanti asks when the incident happened, and the male indicates it took place the previous evening. Montisanti suggests asking the neighbours if they saw or heard anything and the male agrees. A male answers the door to Montisanti at a bungalow across the road and a female answers the door to Melfi at the house next to where the male complainant resides. Both neighbours express having not been alerted to anything or anyone suspicious the previous evening. The PCSOs return to the complainant and Montisanti summarises that it seems unlikely given their enquiries and the nature of the incident that there are any witnesses. Melfi suggests the male park in a different location, and he disagrees before outlining his current family circumstances. The PCSOs empathise and Montisanti concludes by stating that they will be patrolling the area and if the male becomes aware of anything more about the incident to report it. (Obs 16 – 10/01/18)

The mutual participation in a lot of the unplanned face engagements, as the above excerpts illustrate, was of a personal nature in that the content of the talk concerned the life, relationships and emotions of the participants at that moment in time. Consequently, they generated a kind of ‘social intimacy’ between the PCSOs and public building on the sense of togetherness arising from their initial co-presence in the public space (Goffman, 1963, p.100). Despite occurring spontaneously, the

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encounters still possessed purpose, especially from a Neighbourhood Policing perspective. At the very least the face engagements all represented acts of sociability where the PCSOs and public could be seen to be establishing or maintaining a degree of rapport with each other. While more specifically from the position of the auxiliaries, the conversations could be seen to fulfil more instrumental policing tasks, including developing and updating local knowledge about people, places and problems; providing supportive interventions which in turn, in some instances, contributed to dealing with broader community problems, for example street drinking and homelessness; and preventing and addressing low-level criminal and anti-social behaviours. At the same time, the informal and impromptu basis of the conversations increased the opportunity for the PCSOs to initiate, receive and maintain associations with many different publics, some of whom may ordinarily be hard to reach or might be unable or unwilling to participate in planned forms of interaction organised by the police, for example community meetings. Nevertheless, the portrayal of conversations as shared participatory activities overlooks the way in which the presence of a policing representative can impact upon the encounter.

In spite of the largely sociable approach to and structure of conversational encounters involving PCSOs, their positioning as members of police staff could be seen to provide them with enough recognised authority to influence how the interaction was conducted. Whereas the 'rights and obligations' owed to an everyday face encounter tend to be shared equally, the participation of PCSOs resulted in them being unevenly allocated between persons (Goffman, 1963, p.100). In particular the speaking and leave-taking rights were two elements of the face engagement that the auxiliaries seemed to influence. PCSOs, as already referred to in the previous discussion of initiating face engagements, are 'opening persons' with a licence to approach and receive members of the public they come across (Goffman, 1963, p.129). Part of this authorisation involves the right of the PCSOs within the legal remit of their role to make claims of persons, including asking questions, and an expectation that such requests will be responded to and complied with. It is this specific obligation that appeared to implicitly structure the speaking and leave-taking

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rights in face encounters between the PCSOs and public with the extent to which it seemed to influence varying in each instance.

In relation to speaking rights, certainly the use of questions and requests by the auxiliaries to guide the spoken encounters they entered into were a necessary communication tool because they enabled them to fulfil the aforementioned policing functions. However, there were times when these devices together with the role and status of the PCSOs seemed to restrict the content and amount of what was spoken by the other persons present. Take the below field extract for example, the few minimal responses from the group of young people to Barese's line of talk shapes a face encounter where the participants appear to be largely 'denied the communication courtesy' to respond fully (Goffman, 1963, p.100). Indeed, it is not possible or within the scope of the analysis to determine if this is the actual interpretation of the young peoples' reading of Barese's communication. However, in terms of the structure of the interaction, it is observable how the mixture of questions, requests and statements delivered in quick succession to individuals and the group as a whole by a person with authoritative status can potentially limit the speaking rights of the other participants.

Walking down a side road near the main high street, Barese comes across a group of around thirteen young male and female youths, some of whom are messing around stood up while others are sat down chatting. Approaching the group Barese assertively asks if they are alright and without pausing queries what they are doing. She promptly notices that one has a cigarette, and she asks how old she is. I don't hear the mumbled reply, but Barese quickly responds saying that she is confiscating the cigarette and she asks the rest of the group if they have anymore. Another one of the young people mutters a comment to which Barese replies asking if they have any ID to prove their age. Most of the group are silent with a couple of the males making muffled remarks. Barese recognises one of the girls from a previous incident and asks to check the soft drink bottle she is holding for alcohol. Addressing the whole group, Barese instructs them to move on telling them that they cannot congregate in this area.

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They slowly organise themselves and start walking forwards. (Obs 20 – 14/02/18)

Similarly, the PCSOs could often be observed taking control of bringing the face engagements they participated in to a close; a process Goffman (1963, p.110) refers to as 'leave-taking'. In most instances, the face encounters seemed to reach a natural conclusion with the PCSOs expressing closing remarks or instructions that suggested the subject matter in question had been discussed and responded to. At the same time, the termination of face encounters was facilitated by the co-operation of the other participants in recognising and acting on the PCSOs' signals to leave. This demonstration of 'tactful leave-taking' by the public could be seen to be based on the implicit obligation individuals have to 'release those with whom [they are] engaged, should it appear, through conventional cues, that they desire to be released' (Goffman, 1963, p.110). The general inclination for the PCSOs to take charge of the length of the face encounter appeared less a means for them to explicitly demonstrate their authoritative status to the individuals they communicated with, and more of a way to use their role to constructively organise the engagement. To illustrate the potential significance of the PCSOs taking a lead in leave-taking, the below field extract shows how a face encounter can play out when such regulation is lacking.

A male and female approach the mobile police station and report a group of youths on bikes in the town centre over a week ago causing nuisance. The PCSOs empathise with their apparent disapproval of the incident as another female walks over and joins the couple. The male and female comment that there are no police around anymore to which the PCSOs explain the lack of resources and the current NPT operation to increase police presence. The couple then refer to another recent incident where the police didn't directly intervene and Frank attempts to outline police procedures. This leads to the couple expressing their views about the general state of affairs in the town. They are briefly paused by another female asking if she can report drug activity and Frank invites her into the private office area. Vincent is poised listening to the group; he remains quiet, and the group address him less. The subject changes to religion. After a

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few minutes, a police car pulls up. Two PCs get out and brush past the group slightly to enter the van resulting in the members shuffling a little away from the doorway and turning to each other to talk. The PCs sit down and start to speak to Vincent who quickly utters 'bye' to the group before responding to the officers. (Obs 9 – 06/11/17)

In the face encounter, a subtle conflict can be seen to develop between the 'rights of departure' owed Vincent and the 'rules of tactful leave-taking' owed the other participants (Goffman, 1963, p.110). In what ensues, the participants display less cooperation to release Vincent from the face encounter despite his limited involvement in it until a change in the situation prompts leave-taking from both the participants and Vincent. While the structure of the leave-taking could have benefitted from more oversight from Vincent to avoid the conversation digressing into content that could be seen to be irrelevant to the work of the PCSOs, the continuance of the face encounter did allow for the participants to perceive that their views were being heard. Nonetheless, a missing, and possibly more damaging, part of Vincent's leave-taking is the demonstration of a noticeable 'farewell display' (Goffman, 2010, p.79).

A farewell, similar to the function of a greeting, is a supportive ritual in face engagements, however, it differs in that it represents a 'state of decreased access' between persons (Goffman, 2010, p.79). The expression of a farewell in a face encounter 'brings the encounter to an unambiguous close, sums up the consequence of the encounter for the relationship, and bolsters the relationship for the anticipated period of no contact' (Goffman, 2010, p.79). Therefore, the performance of a farewell at the conclusion of a face engagement can be an important statement for figures, like PCSOs, attempting to foster relationships and leave a positive impression on people they may or may not see again. Accordingly, in a lot of instances, whether they were acquainted or unacquainted with the individual and saw them regularly or not at all, there was a tendency for PCSOs to structure their farewells in a similar way that implied or encouraged future contact, as demonstrated below.

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Germani walks over to a male sitting on the ground with a few belongings scattered around him. On seeing the PCSO, the male starts to hurriedly stuff a double duvet into a rucksack that looks too small for it. Germani tries to reassure the male that he wants to offer assistance and he asks the male where he usually stays. The male reports seeking out hostel accommodation on a nightly basis and Germani suggests a couple of hostels he might want to attend. He goes on to ask the male if he has taken any steps to find accommodation through the council and the male suggests that he is waiting for some paperwork to be processed. Germani informs the male that if he ever wants advice or support with gaining accommodation, he is welcome to attend the Police Station and ask for him. He mentions having some links with the council and being able to refer him on. The male agrees, gathers his bags and starts to stand up. Germani offers to help him before saying goodbye. (Obs 3 – 28/07/19)

Approaching the shops, Adriana greets a young girl she knows. The girl is juggling a couple of food items while trying to ride her bike. Adriana suggests how she can manoeuvre the bike and she goes on to ask after the girl's family. The girl mentions a relative who has recently given birth. Adriana, realising that she is heading in a different direction, comments that she will have to visit the girl's family and see the new-born baby soon. The girl smiles and Adriana says bye. (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

In the above fieldnotes, Germani departs the encounter by offering future assistance to a male unknown to him and Adriana leaves the engagement by indicating a potential visit to a girl known to her. Neither of the PCSOs make specific arrangements for future contact with the persons, but they both show an openness to this possibility in their farewells. Ordinarily, the type of farewell will often be determined by the nature and closeness of the relationship between the participants and the probability of their next contact, for example a farewell display to a sibling one regularly sees will be different to that of a long-absent sibling (Goffman, 2010, p.83). However, as is discernible in the two aforementioned unplanned face engagements, these factors are not always distinguishable in the PCSOs' farewells,

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possibly related to their role requiring them to establish rapport and maintain relationships with all persons they engage and the impromptu nature of their encounters making the likelihood of future contact occurring unpredictable. Whether they intended or expected contact with the individuals again, the suggestion by the auxiliaries can potentially allow people to feel considered by them and familiar with them; possibly reinforcing the sense of belonging created from their co-participation in the public space.

At the same time, the gesture of future contact creates a positive impression that is ideally placed in a farewell at the end of an unplanned face encounter. It is at this moment of decreasing access between the participants that the PCSOs can demonstrate consideration without generating 'burdensome anticipations' (Goffman, 2010, p.87). During a farewell there is little opportunity for offerings, like that of suggesting potential contact, to be fully realised and any 'reservations the senders-off have about the merit of the leave-taker', in this case the PCSO, are likely to be 'erased because soon close evaluation will not be an issue' (Goffman, 2010, p.87). The implication here is not to recommend that the auxiliaries bid farewells with ambitious offerings that they do not necessarily have to satisfy because they are less accountable for what they have expressed from this point in the interaction onwards. Rather, it shows how the auxiliaries can demonstrate civility and regard in a way that does not explicitly create expectations, either of them or the public involved, that they might not be able to fulfil.

The section has illustrated the nature and structure of unplanned face engagements between the PCSOs and public during foot patrol to show how these impromptu contacts can symbolise a sense of belonging at the same time as serving a utility in community engagement work, specifically enabling the NPT to develop a better understanding of communities. It shows what the communicative opportunities can be during foot patrol and how they can be utilised to contribute to community engagement practice. What makes these unfocused and focused interactional occurrences possible, and underpins the uniqueness of PCSO patrol on foot, is the accessibility of the auxiliaries in the public space. The next section will consider the

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accessibility of PCSOs in more detail, including the benefit of their accessibility to community engagement and how they can manage it to create privacy in their face encounters.

Accessibility

The PCSO role obliges the auxiliaries to initiate and respond to requests for face engagements with persons they come across, but their positioning in public opened them up for and increased the likelihood of communication, in all the forms discussed so far, taking place. It is this heightened readiness for and responsiveness to social contact that allowed the auxiliaries to demonstrate, what Goffman (2010, p.104) terms, a 'situational presence' that is advantageous to both their work and the wider policing context in a number of ways. To begin with, being increasingly available for a face engagement, a unit of interaction already identified as signalling 'social closeness and relatedness', allows the PCSOs to reinforce a more general sense of belonging between the police and public (Goffman, 1963, p.104). The act of being accepted for talk allows one to become a member of the gathering and the social occasion in which it occurs (Goffman, 1963, p.104). Therefore, the acceptance symbolised by PCSOs receiving a person for talk can both make the individual feel part of the dialogue and connected to the auxiliaries at that point in time as well as related to and included in the wider policing narrative.

Secondly, the accessibility of PCSOs increases the opportunity for them to feature in the unfocused interaction of others which, as touched upon in the previous discussion of conveying information through civil inattention, is equally beneficial to public perceptions of policing. Accessible face engagements, that is those face encounters taking place in the presence of bystanders, involve all persons jointly present to one another engaging in 'a common pool of unfocused interaction, each person, by [their] mere presence, manner, and appearance' giving off some information about themselves at the same time as receiving like information from all the others in attendance (Goffman, 2010, p.154). It is this opportunity for 'widely

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available communication' that benefits the positioning of PCSOs in the public space (Goffman, 2010, p.154). From their 'mere presence' to the 'encounters in which others do and do not see' them in (Goffman, 1963, p.103), information is being transmitted by the PCSOs to the situation at large. Consequently, there is the potential for their presence in the public space and/or involvement in conversational encounters to lead to positive information being communicated about their readiness to engage with people and the type of work they perform. The same observations can also feed into public understanding of policing priorities and allocation of resources, for example the availability of PCSOs in open places might suggest to passing persons that the police force is committed to local policing and public safety. In the same way, the accessibility allows PCSOs to convey visible evidence of desirable characterological traits of their role through bodily gestures as the below field extract illustrates.

Adriana and Furio chat as they stand and wait for the bus. They seem to position themselves a short distance from the front of the stand to allow people to form a queue. The bus pulls in and the PCSOs hover to the side of the queue letting all the people who have been waiting or who are just arriving at the stand to board the bus before them. As the queue shortens, the PCSOs make a slow exaggerated walk to join the end of the line. Later in the shift, the PCSOs wait again at a bus stop to make the journey back to the station. When the bus arrives Adriana signals with her hand for the only other person waiting to board before them. The male smiles and hurriedly moves in front of them. (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

The PCSOs can be seen to demonstrate types of gestures which Goffman describes as 'body gloss', namely the 'self-conscious gesticulation an individual can perform with [their] whole body to give pointed evidence concerning some passing issue' (Goffman, 2010, p.128 and p.129). In the above example, the PCSOs appear to be concerned with showing regard for the public proceeding before them in the bus queue to avoid causing any offence. On the surface, it might be considered a trivial matter, but the performance of this kind of civil courtesy potentially conveys information to the public about how the PCSOs see themselves and others. One way

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of gauging the importance of these types of acts is to think about what the outcome would be if they were not performed (Goffman, 1963). If the PCSOs boarded the bus first when in the presence of queuing others, they might be thought of as self-important or rude, especially as they represent a community support function, which not only reflects badly on the individual auxiliaries but the police force as a whole. The use of body gloss highlights how even when they are not directly engaged in talk with others, PCSOs can interact meaningfully with them (Goffman, 2010, p.137).

Finally, the accessibility of the PCSOs for unfocused and focused interaction in the public space can create a ripple effect of communication to others in the vicinity that aids the policing task they are completing without additional effort or resource. To explain, the below fieldnote distinctly captures the potential reach of information and the means through which it can be transmitted from a PCSO completing routine work in the course of their foot patrol.

Salvatore is posting letters along a designated street where a house was recently burgled to inform the surrounding residents of the crime and remind them to be vigilant. A car pulls up and Salvatore greets the female exiting the vehicle. He knows her through her work at a partner organisation and she resides on the street. They have a brief conversation in which Salvatore mentions the burglary and the female, already aware of the crime, explains that her CCTV shows a male walking up her drive at the alleged time, but he disappears out of sight and his face is indistinguishable. Salvatore finishes the exchange by informing her that he has posted a letter at her address. He continues along the street, and after a couple of minutes, a voice from behind shouts, 'excuse me, could you tell me what you're doing?' We turn to see an approaching female walking her dog. I stroke the dog as Salvatore informs her about the burglary and he hands her a letter. While Salvatore resumes making his way around the houses, I notice the same female a little further up the street stop and talk to another resident also out walking. They both glance in the direction of Salvatore suggesting that he is the topic of conversation. Salvatore indicates that he's covered most of the addresses and we head back along the street. As we come parallel to one house, a male makes his way up the driveway

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uttering a couple of sounds to get our attention. The male asks what we're doing, and when Salvatore explains, he mentions what he knows about the crime. Salvatore concludes by handing him a letter and we head back to the office. (Obs 6 – 16/10/17)

In the field excerpt, crime prevention information is relayed to the residents through letters, face encounters with Salvatore and word of mouth between them; all within a short space of time. While it is not possible to ascertain the number of persons in total who received information from this interaction, including those who were alerted to policing activity by observing Salvatore from inside their property or hearing from those who conversed with him at a later time, it is likely that more people than those who were present were informed of the crime and the PCSO presence. Therefore, regardless of the speed with which such information can be communicated, it provides an example of how the accessibility of the PCSOs can lead to them reaching out to a number of people in different ways during the course of completing a policing activity on foot patrol, potentially maximising its influence and impact at no extra cost.

The idea that the accessibility of the PCSOs opens them up for communication that is discernible to bystanders in the situation at large questions the extent to which their encounters in public can be private, and this is particularly pertinent when the topic of conversation is of a sensitive nature. Indeed, there were instances when the auxiliaries and the participants in a face encounter could create conventional situational closure by going into a private space, for example the staff area of a shop. However, in the main, a 'conventional engagement closure', that is 'some obligation and some effort on the part of both participants and bystanders to act as if the engagement were physically cut off from the rest of the situation', could be seen to be established in the face encounters taking place in areas of high footfall (Goffman, 1963, p.156). At these times, the PCSOs tended to encircle the person/s to create a closed off area or in the event there was only one PCSO they would position themselves in front of the individual/s at a distance that was close enough for them to demonstrate their participation in the face engagement but open enough to allow

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them to comfortably see and speak to one another. In both instances, a key consideration seemed to be 'spacing' whereby the auxiliaries situated themselves in proportion to the participants of the face encounter and the unengaged individuals around them in the available space to enable the exchange of glances and talk without obstruction or intrusion (Goffman, 1963, p.161). Another important factor in the maintenance of conventional engagement closure was the 'regulation of conduct' between the participants, including the control of sound levels, gestures and words to 'protect the privacy of the encounter' (Goffman, 1963, p.155 and p.159). At the same time, the 'integrity and boundaries' of the face engagement could only be maintained if the surrounding bystanders tacitly cooperated in facilitating the closure (Goffman, 1963, p.155 and p.159). However, given the status and visibility of the PCSOs, this was not always possible.

While the PCSOs attempted to create conventional engagement closure, occasionally the presence of the auxiliaries could be seen to attract the attention of bystanders to the point that they encroached on the face encounter in some way. Two possible reasons for the discourtesy seemed to be curiosity and/or a disregard for the work of the auxiliaries. Some bystanders seemed overly interested to know the nature of the auxiliaries' contact with the other participants in the face encounter, potentially stemming from a general nosiness in what was transpiring or out of an inclination to intervene to assist a participant in some way. A policing representative in action, so to speak, can raise questions for an inquisitive onlooker – who are the PCSOs talking to? Has something happened? What are they talking about? Other bystanders, potentially sharing in the same curiosity, also acted in a manner that appeared to be making a subtle point that they did not view the presence of the auxiliaries as significant enough to warrant respect for the integrity and boundaries of the face engagement. In each case, the PCSOs in talk with others could be seen to create an 'excitement level' for bystanders that contributed to their abuse of the 'communication position' they found themselves in (Goffman, 1963, p.155 and p.159). Consequently, every now and then, bystanders took advantage of their positioning by engaging in prolonged gazes or repeated glances; walking or standing

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in close proximity to the PCSOs; or interrupting the encounter. The field extract below illustrates a combination of these actions by passers-by.

Approaching the shopping centre, Barese recognises a dishevelled male sitting on the ground. She greets him and asks him how he is and if he is making any progress with accommodation. As the male starts to talk, Barese briefly glances behind her at the steady stream of people walking past and she steps closer to him. The male begins to explain the difficulties he continues to experience when another male stops in passing and greets him before glancing at Barese and walking on. Barese checks out who the person was and the male comments that he knows him to say hello to. Barese continues with the conversation. Soon after, a female approaches the male causing him to glance over at her and she asks him if he received some sandwiches today. He seems to know her and tells her that he did, and she walks away. Barese concludes by saying that she will ask around to find out if there are any other solutions available to support the male and he expresses his appreciation. (Obs 20 – 14/02/18)

The actions of the bystanders in the above extract point to a degree of impropriety in that they prioritised their own needs over showing regard for the conversation that was already taking place between Barese and the male. It is typically expected that the entrant to an encounter will give ‘advance warning of [their] intention and the participants a moment to straighten their house for the newcomer’ (Goffman, 1963, p.161). However, at the same time, there is a sense that their ‘non-person’ treatment of Barese, a concept previously referred to on p.146, could also be related to her role forming part of the public setting and not requiring explicit recognition. Indeed, Barese did not interpret their actions offensively, and the interruptions provided an opportunity for her to learn something more about the people the male was in contact with. Consequently, the breaches in a conventional engagement closure can potentially allow the PCSOs to come into contact with more people and increase their knowledge of the persons or situation.

The accessibility of the PCSOs on foot patrol facilitated communicative contact that allowed the auxiliaries and public to familiarise themselves and build relations with

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each other. The nature of these relations is portrayed in the previous sections in terms of whether the PCSOs were acquainted or unacquainted with people. The next section will develop these references by exploring the 'institution of acquaintanceship' to understand the nature of the PCSO-public relationship during foot patrol, its influence on interaction and its potential contribution to community engagement work (Goffman, 1963, p.112).

Acquaintanceship

A 'tacit contract' informing how persons manage contact with unacquainted and acquainted others guides everyday co-presence in the public space (Goffman, 1963, p.124). In the case of two unacquainted persons coming together, there is a tendency for each party to demonstrate a 'willingness' to avoid seeking a face encounter so as not to take or be taken advantage of through 'inopportune overtures and requests' (Goffman, 1963, p.124). However, as alluded to in the preceding analysis, PCSOs on foot patrol engaging in focused interaction with the public provides one circumstance where two seemingly unacquainted parties can approach each other for contact. In this context, the occupational role of PCSOs places them in an 'exposed position' where they are available to everyone at the same time as making them 'opening persons' authorised to accost others (Goffman, 1963, p.125 and p.129). The subsequent openness of the PCSOs to focused interaction with everyone in their surroundings has been described in the previous sections through making a distinction between the unacquainted and acquainted people the auxiliaries come into contact with. However, when the social relationship of acquaintanceship is explored in more detail, it is evident that there is a degree of acquaintanceship in all relations between the PCSOs and public, and the practice of foot patrol is conducive to developing this acquaintanceship.

Acquaintanceship, in its fullest sense, is described as 'each of two individuals personally identify[ing] the other by knowledge that distinguishes this other from everyone else ... [and] ... each acknowledge[ing] to the other that this state of mutual

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information exists' (Goffman, 1963, p.112). Essentially, acquaintanceship can be observed as evolving from some type of mutual identification between persons. For PCSOs and the persons they came into contact within the course of foot patrol, the principal form of identification involved 'cognitive recognition' whereby the auxiliaries and public distinguished each other by social and/or personal information (Goffman, 1963, p.113). To begin with, the discernibility of the PCSO uniform could allow the public to socially categorise the auxiliaries as on-duty policing representatives. At the same time, in some cases, persons linked the sight of the auxiliaries to exclusive information about them, for example the PCSO's name. A similar process of identification could be seen to take place for the PCSOs with them cognitively recognising persons they came across according to some kind of categorisation loosely pertaining to their general status as a member of the public, for example young person, or their personal identity.

In addition to cognitive recognition, a second type of identification named 'social recognition' is pinpointed which encompasses the 'process of openly welcoming or at least accepting the initiation of an engagement as when a greeting or smile is returned' (Goffman, 1963, p.113). While social recognition is more concerned with the demonstration of a 'ceremonial gesture of contact' as opposed to knowing something of the person(s) involved, for PCSOs whose uniform makes their role and status clearly visible, it could be contended that any form of social recognition extended to the public is likely to be received through cognitive recognition of them (Goffman, 1963, p.113). Nonetheless, social recognition can still form a valid practice to include in thinking about the association between PCSOs and the public because, as Goffman highlights, cognitive recognition can often feature in the functioning of this type of identification (Goffman, 1963, p.113).

The reciprocal activity of cognitive recognition based on social information, namely the identification of the auxiliaries as police staff by the public and the identification of passing persons as members of the public by the PCSOs, and social recognition through glances and greetings appeared to form the basis of the auxiliaries' relations with the public in most of their contact. The nature of this social relationship could

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be described as ‘mere acquaintanceship’ where ‘the rights of social recognition form[ed] the principal substance’ of the connection between the PCSOs and public (Goffman, 1963, p.114). However, the regular presence of the PCSOs in localities could be seen to enable them and some of the people living or working in the areas to progress the basis of their cognitive recognition of each other to centring on personal information. This transition in the type of recognition underpinning PCSO-public acquaintanceship can be partially explained using the concept of ‘second seeing’ (Goffman, 2010, p.323).

Second seeing refers to a person using identificatory information gleaned about a stranger, under circumstances where the person and stranger have caught sight of one another seeing each other, to proffer ‘an acquaintanceship greeting’ in a subsequent encountering of said stranger (Goffman, 2010, p.323). The second seeing between the persons involves their recollection of their first meeting and the identificatory information they acquired, and ‘the participants [can] see from the context of their two seeings that they are appropriately placed socially for acquaintanceship’ (Goffman, 2010, p.323). Applying the principles of second seeing to PCSOs conducting foot patrol in their beat areas, the auxiliaries in regularly attending the same places and coming across the same people can use and build on their previous ‘seeings’ of said persons through talk to learn more about them and the locality. The increased familiarity between the PCSOs and local people they regularly happened upon over time could be seen to ‘informally’ develop their acquaintanceship (Goffman, 1963, p.119). They came to know more about each other through casual means where there were no expectations of either party to perform in a specific way (aside from general courtesy). Alternatively, acquaintanceship could be seen to develop ‘formally’ with the PCSOs having been introduced to some people through their involvement in a policing related matter, participation in a specific intervention or through a third party (Goffman, 1963, p.120). The informal and formal development of acquaintanceship in the course of the PCSOs’ patrols allowed them to have a more personal connection with some people which in turn aided their work.

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The shift to cognitive recognition based on personal information between the PCSOs and some of the public in their communications is particularly meaningful to their community engagement remit. It is the 'mutual personal identification' in this form of recognition that gives rise to them establishing an acquaintanceship which, in most cases, brings about a 'social bondedness' that obliges or entitles contact between them thereafter (Goffman, 1963, p.112 and p.114). Therefore, acquaintanceships, like other relationships, can increase the access between the PCSOs and public, and it was this aspect of the association that could be seen to facilitate an ongoing two-way dialogue (Goffman, 2010, p.79). Their acquaintanceships with some of the local people allowed the PCSOs to regularly enter into talk with them either in passing on the street or visiting them at their place of work or residence for a planned or unplanned meeting. These acquainted face encounters could generate information that confirmed or updated the auxiliaries' knowledge of the community as well as nurturing relations between the PCSOs and persons involved. By drawing on their acquaintanceships with others, a potential outcome for the auxiliaries is that they are able to provide ongoing reassurance and build a picture of the community's needs, risks and threats.

To illustrate acquaintanceship when it was based on 'cognitive recognition - personal information' in action, three types of circumstances in which it materialised are identified. Firstly, PCSOs engaged in brief unplanned face encounters with acquaintances in passing. Some of the field examples already used in the chapter, from Adriana sharing sparkly hand gel with the group of girls on p.157 or Carmine having a catch-up with a male on p.147 to Frank being provided intelligence on p.158, demonstrate the PCSOs having engagements with acquaintances they happened across. Secondly, the auxiliaries conducted brief unplanned visits to acquaintances when they were in the vicinity of the private spaces where they were employed, including local retailers, organisations, partner agencies, charities, libraries, religious venues and schools. It was usually the nature or location of the persons' work that prompted the acquaintanceship in the first instance as they occupied a physical site or delivered a provision where crime and disorder was likely to occur, a footfall of people used the space or the PCSOs could access certain groups or support. The face

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encounters would usually be structured around the auxiliaries finding out if the people, places or services were experiencing any problems or imparting some policing related information, sometimes interspersed with general chit-chat, and depending on what was said, offering advice, support or instructions. Finally, the PCSOs attended planned meetings with acquaintances in private spaces, including their residences and places of work, in the course of their patrol. The purpose of the face engagements was often similar to the impromptu visits in that the PCSOs would be interested to ascertain if there were any issues they could assist with or to provide specific policing information, but they also could centre on the auxiliaries completing a specific task or delivering an intervention. The contacts usually involved more casual conversation as the participants had more time allocated to talk. The below field extracts illustrate acquaintanceship in the latter two circumstances.

Salvatore suggests to Carlo that they check-in at the Primary School up ahead. The headteacher comes to reception, greets the auxiliaries and directs them to her office. In the corridor, a group of children in the playground outside start to congregate at the windows staring in and pointing excitedly at the PCSOs. The PCSOs wave and the headteacher laughs at the stir. Inside the office, Salvatore asks if there's been any problems at the school. The headteacher mentions a now resolved dispute between two families and an incident where a stranger in a car outside the school grounds asked a child to get inside. She adds that it was reported to the police and they are remaining vigilant. Salvatore advises that the school report any further concerns to 101 and they [PCSOs] will keep a lookout during patrol. The headteacher asks if she can book the PCSOs to give a presentation about keeping safe on Halloween and Bonfire Night. They discuss how the presentations can be delivered and arrange a time for Carlo and a colleague to attend. (Obs 6 – 16/10/17)

Benny and Hesh attend a planned meeting with four elderly residents in the communal area of their supported accommodation. The residents welcome the PCSOs, gesture for them to sit down and encourage them to have something to eat and drink. There's some chit-chat before the PCSOs ask if there have been any issues. One resident mentions talking to some street drinkers about

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congregating outside her address. The PCSOs advise her not to confront strangers as it could put her in a risky situation and to report any concerns. Hesh informs the group about the NPT's operation in the town centre which leads onto a brief discussion about the area. Hesh gives a resident a paper copy of this month's local crime figures. She glances over it and comments on the nature and volume of the offences listed. Another resident talks about the impact of austerity and sympathises with the lack of police resources. A male, who has been sitting quietly, describes his suspicions about drug activity outside his property. The PCSOs advise that he take note of any details about the individuals or vehicles involved if it is safe to do so. Benny pulls out a handful of 'bag dipping prevention' items, including bells and straps, for the residents. There's more chit chat with the PCSOs and residents joking with one other. The PCSOs signal that they need to go to their next job, and they arrange a date for the next meeting. (Obs 10 – 16/11/17)

Montisanti knocks on Lilliana's door before walking in. The PCSOs greet Lilliana and her sister, and Montisanti outlines what they plan to do, including completing some more surveys¹⁰ and taking her neighbour's statement to support the Closure Order¹¹ application for a neighbouring property. Montisanti asks Lilliana to fill in another survey and as she completes it her neighbour, Valentina, arrives. There's some general chat before Montisanti explains to Lilliana and Valentina the process of the application. After Valentina completes a survey, Melfi asks her questions about her experience of living on the street and takes note of her responses. In the background, Montisanti continues to talk to the others about day-to-day happenings and helps out making drinks. Every so often he checks that Melfi is gathering the relevant detail as this is her

¹⁰ The survey is a set of questions the PCSOs devised to ascertain residents' views on their neighbourhood, any issues they were experiencing and any action they would like to be taken by the NPT.

¹¹ A Closure Order is a civil intervention available to the police and local authority that can be implemented for up to three months on a property where the court is satisfied that a person or persons have engaged in ASB, disorder or criminal behaviour on the premises or such behaviour is likely or use of the premises is associated with serious disorder or public nuisance. The order can prohibit access to the premises to anyone including the landlord, owner and habitual residents, and can be extended for a further three months. Breach of the order is a criminal offence that carries the penalty of imprisonment (Home Office, 2014, p.38).

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first statement. Melfi reviews what she intends to detail with Valentina before writing it on the forms and Montisanti continues in conversation until she has finished. As the PCSOs get ready to leave, Montisanti states that he will keep in touch and Lilliana agrees to obtain completed surveys from the other residents. (Obs 16 – 10/01/18)

In the face engagements involving acquaintanceship based on ‘cognitive recognition - personal information’, the PCSOs demonstrated an awareness of the people and places that enabled them to engage with, what seemed like, relative ease in lengthy friendly conversations with them. This coming together can be considered a form of supportive ritual wherein the PCSOs demonstrated, in different ways, regard and respect towards their acquaintances in turn serving, among other policing functions, to positively solidify relations between them (Goffman, 2010, p.62-63). Consequently, the acquaintanceships can be seen to allow the PCSOs the opportunity to relate to their localities to gain a type of insight and provide a type of support that would be hard to gauge and develop from the position of a police vehicle. At the same time, the acquaintanceships offer the other participants the chance to have their views and experiences heard and to be advised or supported with issues that matter to them. They can, and feel like they are, influencing local policing. Of course, as the field extracts show, from supplying information to helping out with resident surveys and providing statements, the nature and extent of this contribution will vary, but the acquaintanceships nevertheless can be a means for people to be a part of policing in their localities. Moreover, the acquaintanceships have the potential to influence how the individuals involved perceive and connect with policing in the longer term. If the persons acquainted with the PCSOs have a positive relationship and experience with them, they may be more likely to feel reassured by policing generally and cooperate with different types of policing, like police investigations, in future.

Indeed, acquaintanceship with people did not always mean that the PCSOs engaged in face encounters with them. The social contact arising from their acquaintance could take the form of passing acknowledgement of each other, for example smiles,

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or no focused interaction at all (Goffman, 1963, p.116). There were instances where the PCSOs showed consideration for the acquainted person's circumstances and offered them the right to determine whether or not social recognition or talk would occur (Goffman, 1963, p.116). The fieldnote on p.153 is one such example where Frank outlines the potential negative implications for some of his acquaintances if they are seen talking to him when they are in the company of others resulting in him allowing them to decide if a face engagement will take place when they meet. The demonstration of 'tact' in the execution of social recognition and face engagements was also sometimes displayed by the public as well. Often a person would approach the PCSOs and check that it was permissible for them to engage the auxiliaries in talk. This occurrence is possibly related to said persons interpreting the authoritative status of the PCSOs as bestowing them 'extra rights or to be worth treating carefully' in the 'recognitional engagement' (Goffman, 1963, p.117). Whether or not a face engagement occurs every time the auxiliaries and public are co-present, the existence of an acquaintanceship between them affords both parties the opportunity for future contact. It can be contended that through the formation of an acquaintanceship a sufficient connection has been established for either the PCSOs or public to initiate contact at a subsequent time with little introduction. The idea of ongoing contact leads onto consideration of the 'maintenance rites' of PCSO acquaintanceships (Goffman, 2010, p.73).

In relation to 'ritual support' of the acquaintanceship beyond social recognition in passing, it is customary for participants to 'develop some understanding and presumption concerning the costs and probabilities of contact between them' (Goffman, 2010, p.72). In the case of PCSO acquaintanceships, the connection is between a policing representative and member of the public and occurs in the context of policing activity. On this basis, while there are costs to both parties in terms of time and resources to sustain contact, it could be contended that the cost is reduced for PCSOs because contact takes place in the course of them fulfilling their occupational duties indicating less personal investment. Therefore, unless maintaining contact serves an ongoing interest to the individual, it can be forwarded that there is less expectation or need for the public to commit to upholding the social

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relationship, and the onus rests more with the auxiliaries. With this in mind, probability of contact is then dependent upon the occupational availability of the PCSOs to be in a position to maintain the wellbeing of their acquaintanceships during their shifts. This most likely explains the reason for the different types of acquaintanceships the auxiliaries experienced.

It is impossible for the PCSOs to be able to 'engineer a coming together' with all their acquaintances on a regular basis so maintenance of the social relationship is largely reliant on unplanned contacts with either the auxiliaries happening across acquaintances in passing or attempting to contact them spontaneously if their work responsibilities and patrol route make it possible (Goffman, 2010, p.73). Otherwise, the PCSOs organise meetings with particular acquaintances which, during the fieldwork, was arranged according to workload and demand; particular policing priorities at the time; and whether the acquaintance/s were part of a group or service that the auxiliaries did not come across regularly in the course of their patrol, such as elderly people.

Chapter 6

Impaired Police Visibility

The previous two chapters explored the communicative opportunities for PCSOs on foot to show how this particular form of patrol can facilitate a type of community engagement that creates two-way dialogue with citizens and a better understanding of communities. However, in making this claim, the analysis is not assuming that all PCSOs by their mere co-presence with the public on foot patrol can or will utilise the communicative opportunities described to engage with people. There were instances where either the public or auxiliaries acted in ways that were clearly uncondusive to social contact creating conditions unlikely to bring about community engagement. It could be identified that PCSO visibility was impaired in one of two ways: either through ‘impropriety in the face engagement’ or ‘PCSO inaccessibility’. The chapter will examine these categories to show the communicative challenges and barriers, including improper public conduct, situational factors, individual dispositions of PCSOs and organisational directives and changes, that can arise in PCSO foot patrol to hinder their interactional influence.

Impropriety in Face Engagements

The social position of police staff allows for them to be approached by a wide range of others, partly based on the belief that no one will try to exploit their public status (Goffman, 1963, p.125). Similarly, their social standing permits them to accost the public as it is trusted that their intentions will be legitimate and they will not seek to take advantage of those they engage (Goffman, 1963, p.129). However, any readiness for focused interaction generally places people at risk of ‘pleadings, commands, insults and false information’ (Goffman, 1963, p.105), and the auxiliaries were not excluded from such treatment. There were occasions where members of the public abused the communication position of the PCSOs by acting in an improper manner as illustrated in the field extracts below.

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A male passes Adriana and Furio and stares straight at them with a sullen facial expression. Afterwards Adriana explains that she knows the male and he is renowned for disliking the police, but they are unsure why. She recalls a previous occasion where he was verbally abusive towards her resulting in her Sgt reprimanding and soliciting an apology from him [A]. (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

A young male riding a bike passes Carmine and says something that ends with the statement, 'get a real job.' Carmine turns and shouts back. The male continues riding away and shouts, what sounds like, something similar to his previous insult [B]. (Obs 13 – 07/12/17)

Adriana and Furio separate to check the streets surrounding a park where there has been a complaint of youths throwing fireworks. Furio re-joins Adriana on the main road where she is stood in confrontation with two young males. Adriana is raising her voice to try to overpower the repeated hostile utterances of one of the males. She says that she firstly called over to him to ask him to move out of the line of traffic in the road and she is now speaking to him because he matches the description of the youths linked to the complaint. Three young females walk up the pavement and stand to the side watching the exchange. Furio tries to quieten the male before turning to the females and instructing them to move on. The male says the females are waiting for him, and they remain in their places. The male refuses to listen further and swears at Adriana as he turns away from her and walks up the road. The other male cycles ahead of him and the females follow [C]. (Obs 7 -24/10/17)

The field excerpts show how focused interaction with the PCSOs can involve impropriety in the actions of others. In field examples A and B, the approaching persons take the opportunity to express some form of explicit contempt at the auxiliaries' presence in the public space. In contrast, field extract C shows a male reacting antagonistically in response to having been accosted by Adriana while his acquaintances express their disrespect for the situation by ignoring Furio's instructions and actively breaching the conventional engagement closure of the encounter. Another striking feature of the incivility within this encounter is the male's leave-taking. He animatedly terminates the face engagement by talking

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obscenely at Adriana while walking away from her. In doing so, he exposes his emotions within the encounter to 'the situation at large', explicitly rejects the PCSOs and provides them with little opportunity to 'compose themselves' (Goffman, 1963, p.187). What occurs is a betrayal of the face engagement and a show of disrespect to the auxiliaries (Goffman, 1963, p.188). In addition to instances where individuals addressed the PCSOs directly with incivility there were times when passing persons would exchange critical comments about the auxiliaries in earshot of them.

Vincent turns down a side street a short distance from a couple of males giving directions to a passer-by. The exchange concludes as Vincent approaches and he says in a light-hearted tone to the males, 'you're doing my job for me.' The males briefly glance at Vincent with half-smile expressions before one utters something that sounds disapproving and the other sniggers. (Obs 9 – 06/11/17)

Germani is talking to a homeless male about his circumstances. Two females glance over at the exchange as they pass by. One mutters that they [the PCSOs] should leave the male alone and the other agrees. (Obs 3 – 28/7/17)

In both examples the persons engage in a 'special kind of half scene' where they talk in a 'sufficiently loud and pointed fashion to be heard' by the PCSOs but regulate what they say enough to give the auxiliaries the chance to dismiss their remarks (Goffman, 1963, p.186). While half scenes allow for the person targeted to respond to the comments, usually with an expression similar to 'did you say something?', the auxiliaries tended to disregard half-spoken muttering (Goffman, 1963, p.186).

All the instances of impropriety show persons demonstrating some form of 'situationally improper' behaviour signalling that they are or want to appear alienated from the ongoing engagement (Goffman, 1963, p.217 and p.231). To assess any situationally improper act and any perpetrator of impropriety, Goffman (1963, p.218) proposes that consideration be given to the improper person using the following questions:

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‘Does the actor have the capacity and training to appreciate the meaning of his offense, and if so, does he in fact appreciate its meaning? Is the act within the physical control of the actor, and if so, would he be willing to change his conduct if he were apprised of its meaning and given the opportunity to do so? Does the actor have extenuating reasons, external to the participants in the situation, for committing the offense?’

The multitude of factors that can arise from this line of questioning point to the wide-ranging nature and significance of an individual’s ‘alienation from the gathering and its rulings’, including ‘malicious acts’ signalling ‘extreme intentionality’ through to uncontrollable or ‘preoccupied’ behaviours marking ‘complete unintentionality’ (Goffman, 1963, p.218-219). Given that many types of intentionality, unintentionality and levels of significance can exist in the commission of situational improprieties, it is evident that the actual offense conveys little information about the perpetrator (Goffman, 1963, p.219-220). While it is not within the scope of the research to consider the specific motivations of situationally improper persons during patrol, something can be said about the interpretations those in their presence can make about their improper conduct. This is especially relevant given that whenever a person comes into the ‘immediate presence of a representative of a social organization’, in this case a PCSO, they will inevitably ‘communicate something about [their] relationship to this organization’ (Goffman, 1963, p.246).

Situational improprieties can highlight information about the offending person’s ‘relationship to a community, a social establishment, a kinship network [...] and any other unit of social organization (Goffman, 1963, p.246). Therefore, thinking broadly about the institution of public policing which the auxiliaries represent, some of the situational improprieties experienced by the PCSOs may be exercised by a person as a means of showing their resentment to what the auxiliaries symbolise and exhibiting some distance from it (Goffman, 1963, p.223 and p.225). Relatedly, ‘acts of interpersonal defiance’ may be employed by a person who perceives that they are being prohibited as a result of the rulings of the policing institution, for example in fieldnote C the male is aggrieved by Adriana who, in keeping with the powers and

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function of her role, attempts to direct and question him (Goffman, 1963, p.228). In such circumstances, the offense can be a way for the perpetrator to 'test the limits' of the relationship (Goffman, 1963, p.228); to what extent can the PCSO be pressured to change or cease their initial course of action? At the same time, what may contribute to most of the acts of impropriety described is the degree of regard persons have for the PCSO role itself.

The auxiliaries are largely known to possess limited policing powers which may inform the extent of interpersonal respect persons bestow the role and the level of formality, or 'tightness' as Goffman terms it, in their conduct towards the PCSOs (Goffman, 1963, p.228). Accordingly, people may use 'extreme expressions of looseness' in the presence of the auxiliaries to communicate their knowledge of the PCSOs' restricted powers and possibly the subsequent unimportance they associate with their role (Goffman, 1963, p.228). The understanding that the PCSO role may be the target of the offense is reinforced by some PCSOs, including Adriana in fieldnote A, disclosing times when persons who had acted offensively later behaved appropriately when in the presence of police officers. In comparison it seems that some persons considered police officers to be owed tighter conduct. Nevertheless, a lot of the improprieties the PCSOs experienced, including most described in this section, involved the offending persons engaging in some form of focused interaction with them. In doing so, they were affording the auxiliaries enough attention to acknowledge their existence which goes some way towards them legitimising the PCSO presence as opposed to showing the auxiliaries no visual or verbal consideration at all (Goffman, 1963, p.109).

Whatever the target of the individual's actual or ostensible alienation, the situational impropriety through which it is conveyed will be first and foremost expressed as alienation from the gathering (Goffman, 1963, p. 231). Consequently, whether intended or not, it is only the persons present, in this case the PCSOs, who receive the offense with all the offending person's subsequent actions being 'superimposed on these original situational meanings' (Goffman, 1963, p.231). Therefore, to look beyond the situation and recognise that the impropriety was not directed at the

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gathering requires the PCSOs to be willing to adopt a sympathetic understanding. However, taking such a position is not 'automatic' and is reliant on 'special information' and a 'special effort at interpretation' (Goffman, 1963, p.246). The open-mindedness, willingness and knowledge required for a sympathetic understanding was visible in some of the PCSOs face encounters where slight forms of impropriety were displayed by participants, as illustrated below.

Adriana and Furio approach a group of four boys on bikes circling a small green space next to a primary school. Adriana greets a couple of the boys by name and asks them how they are. The oldest looking boy tries to shush another from answering her questions. One of them mentions doing wheelies in the street and Adriana warns him that it is not safe. The older one then admits that he is due in court for an ASB related offence which he goes on to give details about. Adriana advises the boys that they don't want to be going to Prison, and the youngest looking boy starts asking questions about prison; 'what's the food like?' Adriana suggests it isn't nice, and the boy requests other details. The older boy seems a bit more engaged in the conversation, and Adriana asks him about his bike. The exchange concludes with Adriana advising the boys to be careful cycling on the road. Afterwards Adriana tells me about the older boy, his family circumstances and the group dynamics with the youngest boy often accompanying the others despite not always wanting to join in with them. (Obs 4 – 27/09/17)

In the fieldnote, it appears that Adriana's insight and familiarity with the boys informs her management of the face encounter. She is able to overlook the older boy's initial resistance and maintain talk with the rest of the group which leads to the boy's integration into the conversation. It can be considered a positive face engagement in that Adriana was able to build rapport with the boys, add to her knowledge of them and impart some general safety and crime prevention messages potentially influencing their behaviour and encouraging future contact.

PCSO Inaccessibility

Occasionally during periods of foot patrol, the auxiliaries participated in minimal focused interaction with the public, for example affording civil inattention to a few persons in passing or only communicating with people when they were completing a specific task that purposely involved a conversational encounter, for instance a home visit. The resulting communication deficit in their patrol appeared to be related to the locations the PCSOs frequented sometimes occupying few, if any, people; the auxiliaries from time to time not making the best use of their communication position in public; and organisational changes that had taken place under austerity to adapt to reduced resources. Taking each of these circumstances, 'low footfall of people', 'missed interactional opportunities' and 'organisational changes', this section will consider the range of factors, including external constraints, supervisory influences and individual dispositions, that appeared to contribute to PCSO inaccessibility. Accordingly, the aspects of foot patrol that are within the control of the NPTs and auxiliaries will be highlighted to indicate how they can be managed so as to maximise PCSOs visibility in public and thus increase their reach to develop their community engagement practice.

Low Footfall of People

At 1015, Germani heads out on foot patrol to a residential area to follow-up on three unrelated neighbour disputes. After forty minutes of walking through terraced streets and crossing a busy bypass, we reach the first address and Germani knocks forcefully on the front door. After another attempt, there's no answer and Germani posts a note informing the resident of his visit. At the second address a few streets away, Germani knocks on the door a couple of times before posting a note. Walking away, he describes how daytime is the ideal period for the PCSOs to do home visits, but it is often the time when most people are not available which makes it difficult to contact people. A short distance around the corner, we reach the final address. Nobody is in and Germani posts a note. Germani asks me about my fieldwork, and I mention

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observing a lot of HVP and link it to the ongoing public demand for 'more bobbies on the beat'. Germani comments that there will always be an issue with patrol because it is not possible for everyone to see the police all of the time. He describes how the police can patrol a street, but if the residents are not in and looking out of their window at the exact moment the police officers and staff pass, they will never know about it and assume there is no police presence. We walk back to the town centre and reach the shopping area at 1150 [A]. (Obs 11 – 28/11/17)

The walking routes and locations the PCSOs frequented were sometimes only occupied by a small number, if any, pedestrians, residents or customers. Indeed, there were a lot of unpredictable and uncontrollable external influences, from the type of weather through to the variable daily routines of residents, that impacted upon the presence and absence of persons at particular times of day in certain places. Moreover, the auxiliaries could be restricted by the type of shift they were working and the allocated activities or tasks they were required to complete. Take for example Germani in fieldnote A, he has to follow-up with a number of persons in one neighbourhood, but he is working a daytime shift, and nobody is at home, most likely related to the time of day. This set of circumstances is, as he describes, a frustrating and common part of the job which both hinders his completion of specific duties and, with few other residents around, his general capacity to be seen by and potentially have social contact with people. Accordingly, the conflict between the PCSOs' shift patterns and the daily lives of people often made it difficult for them to be consistently visible. One possible consequence, identified by Germani, is that the public are more likely to conclude that the police do not patrol an area rather than consider that it is a matter of they themselves having not been there to see the police in attendance.

Furio acknowledges a young girl as we enter the library at around 1600. Inside, Furio greets one of the staff members at the reception desk and asks if they've experienced any issues. She explains that a group of young people have been misbehaving recently, one of whom is sat with a group using the computers now, but there have been no problems today. We go to join Adriana in the

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seating area, and she states that she made an announcement when she arrived to inform people of her presence, but nobody has come over. Aside from the small group at the computers, I notice that there's only a few people pottering around and mulling over books. During the conversation that follows, Adriana describes how when she started in the role there were more support organisations and venues, especially where young people could socialise, in the neighbourhood which enabled them to visit different clubs and agencies on patrol. She details how over the years many of these places have closed due to funding cuts leaving few locations, except for the library, for people to go and for them [PCSOs] to patrol [B]. (Obs 7 – 24/10/17)

Relatedly, the potential sense that the police are not present in localities is possibly aggravated by there being fewer locations that create opportunities for PCSOs and the public to come into contact with each other during their patrol. Over time the landscape of neighbourhoods, as Adriana points out in field excerpt B, has altered to the extent that a lot of organisations have either closed or relocated. The gap in service provision not only impacts on the support available to residents but reduces the shared spaces that they have use of. Consequently, outside of the traditional high footfall areas, for example shops, there are fewer sites in neighbourhoods where PCSOs can be regularly visible and accessible to residents.

At 1445 Carmine heads out to patrol an area that is around 4 miles away. He expresses his preference for walking over public transport. Aside from a small group of schoolchildren and an elderly male on a scooter, there are few pedestrians on our walking route along the main roads. It's getting dark and after around 45 minutes, Carmine turns into a quiet housing estate and he is stopped by a male he knows for a quick chat. At 1600, we arrive at an address where Carmine briefly follows up with a female about the theft of her child's bike on school premises. As we leave it starts to rain heavily and Carmine suggests going to a nearby residential home he often frequents. Once there, he obtains access to a building that houses a communal dining area. We are the only ones around and Carmine makes us each a drink before spending some time doing work on his handheld device. At 1700, we set out again into the drizzle and make our way through a quiet housing estate that leads onto a vast

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area of open parkland. As we walk across the dimly lit park dodging large puddles, a dogwalker and a short time later a female talking on her mobile pass us. On exiting the park, Carmine directs us back to the station through some quiet residential areas and we arrive at 1820 [C]. (Obs 13 – 07/12/17)

While there were obstacles outside of the auxiliaries' control that impacted upon the presence of people during their patrol, there equally appeared to be organisational and personal influences informing their practice that contributed to the amount of people they encountered. Individually, the PCSOs exercised some discretion over how and where they conducted their patrol within their neighbourhoods, especially during periods when they had no allocated jobs or time available between tasks which, as illustrated in fieldnote A, could easily occur if people were not at home. It was in these circumstances that the choices the auxiliaries sometimes made in relation to how and where to patrol seemed disadvantageous to their community engagement remit. In particular, the PCSOs' patrol decisions sometimes appeared to be based on convenience and habit as opposed to maximising their visibility.

Take for example Carmine in field excerpt C, he not only chooses to walk the lengthy distance to his dedicated neighbourhood, but he takes routes where there are low footfalls of people and he spends a period of time in a place where no one is present. Of course, the time of year, time of day and weather will have impacted upon the numbers of people in attendance. Nevertheless, there were alternative options available to him that may have increased the number of people he encountered during at least three hours of his walking patrol. Firstly, Carmine could have used public transport to travel to his neighbourhood which, at that time of day and in those particular weather conditions, is likely to have been busy. Secondly, he could have incorporated the high streets and retail areas into his walking routes, especially as they were in the vicinity of where he patrolled. Together these choices would have increased the likelihood of him being visible to more people and engaging in unfocused and focused interaction with them.

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At the start of the shift, the Sgt informs me that I will be observing Carlo and Salvatore in Raycliff. The Sgt recalls how in the past the police couldn't enter the main council estate due to the level of antipathy towards them, but in an effort to address crime and improve community relations, the police 'flooded' the area and established a presence. The team now have a satellite office situated in the building of a partner agency on the estate. The Sgt adds that relations with residents have generally improved although officers still experience some hostility which, she says, I'll probably get a sense of when I'm there [...]

Towards the end of the shift at around 1600 when we're walking through the estate, I comment to the PCSOs that the estate itself has seemed deserted today. Up ahead I see a male doing some construction work in a backyard, and I think to myself that this is only the third time I've seen people outside on the estate today. Salvatore responds jokingly, 'they're getting ready', suggesting that they'll be more residents around and issues to deal with in the evening. [D].
(Obs 6 – 16/10/17)

In addition to PCSOs' patrol decisions, there was a sense that organisational decisions structuring PCSO patrol practice were, in some instances, not being consistently updated to adapt to changes in circumstances. This appeared to contribute to some of the auxiliaries becoming fixed in patrol routines that were potentially counterproductive. Field extract D illustrates one such instance where the PCSOs continued to be based on an estate conducting regular patrols, in line with a strategy implemented by the NPT, despite some acknowledgement that the situation had improved and, at least during the time of the fieldwork, it was achieving little in the way of community engagement. Therefore, it questioned the extent to which the perceived overdose of PCSO patrol in that area of the neighbourhood continued to be a constructive policing strategy.

Aside from considerations around whether 'flooding' an area with police officers and staff is a productive means of dealing with police tensions and improving community engagement in the first instance, it could be argued that the NPT maintaining a visible presence where there is little to no footfall of people for interaction is problematic.

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Operationally, the stationing of PCSOs in an area where there are few people or issues, at least at certain times of the day, is an inefficient allocation of resources. Even if it is considered that there is a need for a sustained police presence, such an assessment should be dynamic in that it should reflect the changing particularities of the area to update the times, places and ways patrol can be best utilised. In fieldnote D, there was a sense from the Sgt's description of the improved police relations with residents and Salvatore's assessment, albeit light-heartedly expressed, of when residents were likely to be around that the PCSO patrol could be more effectively delivered there. Otherwise, at least from a dramaturgical perspective, there is the potential for the PCSOs' visibility to achieve very little in relation to community engagement and, in some instances, facilitate community disengagement.

A foot patrol that involves little to no focused interaction with residents due to their absence at the time, as Germani highlighted in fieldnote A, can limit what the auxiliaries can do practically and potentially generate the belief that the police have no presence in the area. Alternatively, if residents continually observe a PCSO patrol through unfocused interaction and in the absence of any understanding of their work in the area, they may be more inclined to hold the view that they are being unfairly targeted by the police. Especially in housing areas, similar to the council estate in field extract D, where residents had experienced an intense period of police intervention involving enforcement activity followed by an ongoing police presence. Here, the sustained police visibility through PCSO patrol might be viewed as an extension of the initial enforcement action, as opposed to a separate form of intervention with a community engagement purpose. In these circumstances, the visibility of the PCSOs can create negative connotations and symbolise a type of security that does not bring the residents a sense of safety and comfort. Subsequently, in the event that residents are co-present with the auxiliaries in the public space, they may be more likely to avoid the PCSOs or engage in some form of impropriety in their focused interaction with them.

All of the PCSOs had knowledge of the different methods of accessing people in their localities, for example linking in with the meetings and events of partner agencies or

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setting up opportunities to talk with different groups like school children or elderly people, and they demonstrated using them. However, in some instances, it appeared that their application of these approaches had become centred on specific locations or gradually stopped, in part related to not adapting to changes in the service provision within areas. Therefore, repeated attention to where PCSOs are focusing their patrol efforts, what this entails and the extent to which it is perceptible to the public could enhance the interaction facility of the auxiliaries. It is important to point out that the analysis is not suggesting that PCSOs require more oversight to conduct their patrol per se, it is outlining the potential advantage of a more joined up approach between the supervisory ranks and the auxiliaries within NPTs to ensure more structure and consistency in foot patrol practice.

The preceding assessment of how PCSO patrol can be counterproductive to community engagement highlights the potential double-edged nature of police visibility and the importance of NPTs generally, and PCSOs specifically, tailoring their communicative mechanisms to the individualities of their neighbourhoods. The presence of PCSOs will not, for every neighbourhood area, straightforwardly lead to and fulfil a community engagement purpose. Instead, there is the potential for PCSO patrol to be invisible to localities or convey messages that unnerve residents and have a damaging impact upon their understandings and experiences of policing. In particular, the potential for patrol work to represent danger and insecurity can lead to it being interpreted as a destructive intervention in some communities. Overall, the understandings generated from the analysis of low footfall draws attention to the value of NPTs continually reviewing patrol practice, including an appraisal of what the presence of the auxiliaries is potentially communicating to residents and its effectiveness in fulfilling a community engagement function, to inform the ways in which PCSOs are deployed to conduct their patrol. Over time it could be seen how PCSOs making choices about how and where to patrol based on personal preferences and conveniences in combination with outdated management oversight could create static and unconstructive patrol routines in some neighbourhood areas.

Missed Interactional Opportunities

The lack of focused interaction with the public during foot patrol in many of the instances observed during the fieldwork appeared to be related to the 'body symbols' expressed by the PCSOs potentially signalling to persons in their immediate surroundings that they were inaccessible for social contact (Goffman, 1963, p.35). These symbols were specific aspects of the auxiliaries' appearance and actions, what Goffman terms 'body idiom', which formed the unfocused interaction available to all those present to perceive (Goffman, 1963, p.34). A person, whether they are in talk or not, cannot stop communicating through body idiom. Accordingly, there is an anticipation that people will present themselves in certain ways in front of others, specifically that their body idiom will communicate the 'right thing', so as to convey 'the behaviours that ought to be shown' (Goffman, 1963, p.35).

For PCSOs conducting foot patrol in public they can be seen to be acting as police representatives are expected to act – they 'fit in' (Goffman, 1963, p.35). On the surface, their situational presence on patrol shows them to be appropriately engaged in an occasioned main involvement, that is an activity that is the principal focus of their attention and is 'an intrinsic part of the social occasion [their work shift] in which the situation occurs' (Goffman, 1963, p.50). However, examining closer the allocation of the auxiliaries' involvement during their patrol through making inferences from their body idiom suggested at times that they were unavailable for everyday social contact with bystanders (Goffman, 1963, p.37). Specifically, the PCSOs use of handheld devices and engagement in conversational encounters with each other appeared to act as barriers to perception that in turn could reduce opportunities for interaction with the passing public. These two portable involvement shields will be discussed separately below to show how they could enable the auxiliaries to 'maintain the impression of proper involvement' in their work at the same time as potentially causing them to be neglectful of their 'situational obligations', in this case their availability for focused interaction with those around them (Goffman, 1963, p.41).

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All the PCSOs had been issued with compact digital devices, formally named Prontos, to access the police systems and complete work tasks outside the station, including finding out the details of jobs, updating records and accessing emails. In light of the auxiliaries covering large geographical areas and, in most instances, no longer having convenient access to satellite offices to use the computers, the handheld devices offered an efficient means for them to keep up to date with their work on the go reducing, in theory, the time spent away from their neighbourhood in the main station. Nevertheless, from time to time, it seemed that the PCSOs use of Prontos in the public space absorbed an unnecessary amount of their attention, especially when on the majority of occasions, they were still allocating themselves time to use the office-based computers to complete work before, during and/or after their time on patrol. Furthermore, the physical action of using the Prontos situated the auxiliaries' bodies away from the public.

The PCSOs were usually seated with one hand holding the Pronto; the other hand holding a stylus to aid operation of the device; their upper body leaning forward; and their eyes looking down at the Pronto screen in front of them. Consequently, their positioning significantly reduced the amount of eye contact the auxiliaries could engage in with those around them. Given that 'eye contact opens one up for face engagement' (Goffman, 1963, p.95), the PCSOs in concentrating their eyes away from their surroundings were impeding their capacity to communicate in the natural and unplanned ways illustrated in Chapter 4. While the auxiliaries could still be approached, their bodily arrangement facilitated the appearance that they were occupied with work activity suggesting that they were temporarily unavailable, at least for everyday social contact. A similar inaccessibility could be observed in the action of the auxiliaries being engaged in conversational encounters with each other during patrol.

Generally, the PCSOs conducted patrol in pairs. Given that the auxiliaries were in the company of one another completing the same tasks, it was understandable that they occupied a lot of their time walking around the public space in talk with each other.

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Whether the resulting 'conversational cluster' involved talk relating to work or personal matters, the content of the exchange in the open space could be concealed through their 'control of facial and bodily expression' (Goffman, 1963, p.176). The ability to shield the conversation suggests that it causes little disruption to the auxiliaries' work activity and still allows them to continue fulfilling their responsibilities. In this way, it might be considered to be a 'subordinate side involvement' in that it is an activity that the PCSOs can carry out at times when their full attention is not required by the overarching task that dominates them (Goffman, 1963, p.44). Accordingly, the conversational byplay allows the auxiliaries to 'drain off some unusable involvement capacity' when they perceive nothing to be occurring around them (Goffman, 1963, p.52). However, the chance to engage in a shielded conversation without appearing to be deviating from the task in hand or causing offense to those around them simultaneously creates 'one of the most significant involvement shields' (Goffman, 1963, p.176).

The concealed conversation allows the PCSOs to convey appropriate involvement within the situation even if they are not strictly focused on their main work task. Furthermore, the ease with which this type of activity can be sustained can progressively attract more of the auxiliaries' attention taking them away from their concern for the passing public (Goffman, 1963, p.45). While a conversation, in this context, may be considered 'minor in everyday terms' with it being expected to only occupy the PCSOs' 'lesser and unimportant' selves, it is precisely this type of routine and accepted subordinate side involvement that poses a 'constant threat to obligatory behaviour, ever ready to absorb more of the individual's concern that is felt proper' (Goffman, 1963, p.45). Consequently, it highlights the potential for the auxiliaries to unknowingly give more weight to conversation with each other during patrol resulting in it becoming an 'overdemanding subordinate involvement' that can distract them from ordinary opportunities to interact with the public (Goffman, 1963, p.64).

Aside from conversing PCSOs creating conditions that can divert their attention away from the public, the performance of the act itself can discourage passing persons

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from affording the auxiliaries consideration. Two uniformed PCSOs walking and talking together are in a 'with', namely they are 'a party of more than one whose members are perceived to be together', and this is visibly perceptible to those around them through unfocused interaction (Goffman, 2010, p.19). Accordingly, the appearance of the on-duty auxiliaries in conversation can generate an obligation in the surrounding bystanders to act as if the encounter is 'physically cut off from the rest of the situation' (Goffman, 1963, p.156). This set of circumstances was previously highlighted from the perspective of the PCSOs to illustrate their actions to maintain conventional engagement closure when participating in face engagements with the public. However, it can still apply to the auxiliaries talking to each other alone as their actions show them to be engaged in a conversational encounter. While it was previously pointed out that bystanders did at times intrude on the auxiliaries' face engagements, they can, in perceiving the PCSOs to be occupied, also cooperate in maintaining the conventional engagement closure. This can take the form of bystanders extending 'a type of civil inattention [...] designed for encounters' to express that they are concentrating their attention elsewhere and considerably distancing themselves in the available space (Goffman, 1963, p.156 and 161). The potential for conventional engagement closure to occur highlights how the apparent accessibility of the PCSOs can be unknowingly concealed by persons around them, which again obstructs focused interaction from taking place with the public.

The PCSOs use of Prontos and conversation with each other during foot patrol highlights how their outward expression of accessibility can be concealed. In both instances, the auxiliaries facial and bodily gestures showed them to be engrossed in activity and unavailable for focused interaction with the public. To a certain extent, these activities allowed the PCSOs to control bystanders' access to them because they justified the auxiliaries diverting their eyes elsewhere which stopped them from 'meeting other's eyes and thus avoid[ing] cooperative claims' (Goffman, 1963, p.94). Certainly, the prospect of being unapproachable will be, at times, appealing for some PCSOs, as Goffman (1963, p.106) suggests, 'the obligation to be properly accessible often covers a desire to be selectively quite unavailable.' This also highlights how the auxiliaries did not always fully realise their communication position in the public

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space and the opportunities it created for positive unfocused and focused interaction with anyone in passing. Consequently, they were less likely to appreciate the subtle ways in which they could communicate with the people around them, for example glancing, smiling and passing greetings. This rationale seemed increasingly probable given the amount of time the PCSOs had available to them in the office to complete computer-based tasks and the casual content of their conversational encounters indicating that using Prontos and engaging in talk with each other were not always essential activities. Therefore, it appeared that they engaged in these undertakings to maintain the impression of appropriate involvement to possibly sustain a level of activity, particularly at times when they perceived that there was little happening or few people around on their patrol. In effect, the acts could be perceived as forming 'portable sources of involvement' that could be utilised by the PCSOs to give the appearance of activity during periods of supposed inactivity on patrol (Goffman, 1963, p.51).

Organisational Change

At 1024 Livia and Parisi leave the station to conduct vehicle patrol. As we drive along, I ask if they prefer using the car and they agree that it makes it easier to get around. Parisi explains that the restructuring of the NPTs resulted in them dealing with jobs across the whole neighbourhood region, including areas they are unfamiliar with, in addition to being dedicated to larger 'beats'. Consequently, if they have a number of jobs to complete, they can be located far apart, and it is more difficult and time consuming to attend them on foot or using public transport. I ask if they notice any differences between foot and vehicle patrol. Parisi states that when they pass a location, they can often miss a lot of what is going on, and Livia adds that they are not able to investigate an area, like smell or look around, in the same way as they would on foot. Livia goes on to describe people not stopping them when they're in a vehicle and she compares it to a foot patrol on a previous shift where they struggled to make their way up the street due to the number of people approaching them.

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Parisi pulls up outside an address where Livia is following up with the complainant of an attempted burglary. No one is at home and Livia leaves a note with her details. The PCSOs have no other allocated jobs this morning and Parisi indicates that they'll drive around. We travel to some of the rural areas on the outskirts of Seabarrow which are quiet with few people around. Parisi comments that they don't get chance to cover these areas usually because of how far away they are and few issues directing them here. Livia points out that it's good for the residents to see a police car at least. Parisi talks about how when she was assigned a smaller beat, she knew everything that was going on in the area and was known to a lot of the local people. Now, she has less chance to spend time in her dedicated area and when she does attend, residents tend to comment that they'd thought she'd left because they rarely see her. Parisi suggests that staffing is complicated by the other demands on the NPT. She explains that they have days, like today, where most of the staff have been deployed to conduct a land search for weapons and so whoever else is on shift has to pick up the remaining work. We drive through some housing estates and pass a shopping parade. We arrive back at the station for 1235. (Obs 17 – 31/01/18)

The geographic boundaries of the NPTs were restructured to create fewer larger NPT areas, in line with the metropolitan boroughs of the county, to adapt to the reduction in resources brought about by austerity. The move included the amalgamation of a number of the NPTs to the newly mapped neighbourhoods and the relocation of all staff from satellite offices to one or two larger police stations in each NPT area. From fieldwork discussions, it appeared that the rationale for centrally locating all staff in each NPT related to saving money from no longer having to finance lots of different premises and making it easier, given the larger geographical areas, to manage and deploy staff. Several of the satellite offices remained in use, however given that all staff were primarily based at the police stations, they functioned less as points of contact for the public. This restructure of the NPTs, as the fieldnote highlights, impacted upon how the PCSOs completed their work in two significant ways.

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Firstly, PCSOs were authorised to drive the police vehicles to assist them in travelling around their larger NPT areas and completing their routine work tasks. In some instances, it was too time consuming for them to walk or use public transport to cover the distances required to complete their allocated jobs, and police officers were not always available to chauffeur them around. However, PCSOs use of vehicles to complete specific work tasks merged with their patrol function to the extent that they did not conduct foot patrol when they had use of a vehicle. The above fieldnote illustrates how PCSOs in vehicles can be seen to replicate the same communicative behaviours as police officers in vehicles as outlined in Chapter 4. Essentially, the auxiliaries inside the bounded space of the vehicle experience restricted unfocused and focused interaction with the public which questions the extent to which they can fulfil an engagement function. On the one hand, PCSOs use of vehicles could be considered less of an issue due to a general shortage of police vehicles in the NPTs and police officers taking priority in using them resulting in fewer opportunities for them to drive. On the other hand, the regularity with which PCSOs needed to drive the vehicles to complete specific jobs or were able to because vehicles were available to them was sufficient to raise concerns about the use of foot patrol in the long term.

There is a risk with increasing PCSOs dependence on using vehicles that the auxiliaries will accord less value to foot patrol and the practice will diminish over time, especially given that the organisational conditions have been created for PCSOs to develop a preference for using vehicles over walking. This was partly evidenced by some PCSOs asking about vehicle availability during their shifts when they did not necessarily require one for the tasks they had planned or the distances they were intending to travel. The potential for PCSOs to increasingly develop an affinity to using vehicles will possibly feed into how they construct their cultural identity within the organisation as it reduces the occupational differences between them and police officers. While it is not within the scope of the study to explore PCSOs' individual motivations for preferring the vehicle and the cultural implications, from a dramaturgical perspective a vehicle can, at least through unfocused interaction, conceal the role identity of a PCSO and give the impression to the passing public that they are a police officer. For some PCSOs, the potential for the vehicle to disguise

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their identity and increase their occupational alignment with their PC colleagues might make it an attractive device to incorporate into their everyday work.

With the potential preference for conducting vehicle patrol, it is likely that PCSOs, similar to police officers, will not adapt their use of the vehicles to increase social contact with the public, such as spending some time outside the vehicle walking around an area. This possibility is, in part, illustrated by Parisi and Livia who, despite acknowledging the communicative shortcomings of the vehicle, continue to conduct their patrol in the vehicle and assume the notion that the presence of the vehicle will, at the very least, provide a reassurance function. In the event that the worth and use of foot patrol by PCSOs does decline, it has the potential to challenge the necessity of their role, particularly as they were originally introduced to deliver a visible police presence on foot.

Secondly, PCSOs were essentially spread across the whole of the NPT area to accommodate the shortfall in resources. The auxiliaries were still dedicated to specific localities within the NPT area and they endeavoured to spend their time patrolling them. However, as Parisi describes, their dedicated beats had increased in size, and for some PCSOs had changed altogether with the amalgamation of teams. Moreover, there was an expectation that the auxiliaries would complete jobs and patrols in other parts of the NPT area to fulfil overarching priorities when reduced staffing and increased demand required. Consequently, the PCSOs were unable to consistently cover the whole territory of their dedicated beats and had less time to commit to them. Instead, they often spent small amounts of time in unfamiliar areas and/or completing tasks that removed them altogether from providing an engagement function. This was complicated by the PCSOs frequently not being able to plan their time strategically as they often only became aware of the NPT's priorities or jobs unrelated to their dedicated localities on the day of their shift.

Taken together, the changes to how PCSOs were deployed could be seen to reduce their ability to deliver a consistent communicative influence making it difficult for them to maintain an interactional presence in their dedicated areas and establish

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one in the short periods they spent in unfamiliar areas. If PCSOs are not regularly visible for unfocused and focused interaction with unacquainted and acquainted persons they can struggle to create or maintain positive perceptions of local policing, a dialogue with people and an understanding of communities. Moreover, if the auxiliaries are positioned in unfamiliar areas for short periods, they may lack or not have time to develop the knowledge required to deliver the most communicative impact on their patrol, such as having an awareness of the times and places where there are high footfalls of people or the community organisations where they can access different groups of people. These issues highlight the importance of PCSOs being allocated the time to be sufficiently dedicated to their beats to establish and sustain a visibility that can deliver community engagement effectively. By exploring visibility from the perspective of what it looks like when it is impaired, the chapter has aimed to emphasise the strengths attached to what it means when there is high visibility in PCSO foot patrol, as set out in Chapter 5, and provide a more informed appreciation of what it can contribute to community engagement work.

Chapter 7

Distinguishing Police Visibility

The chapter will firstly summarise the findings and analysis presented in Chapters 4 - 6 to answer the research questions set out below to show how an interactional understanding of police visibility is constructed. The second section will consider how this perspective of police visibility complements, adds to and develops existing knowledge about police patrol and community engagement.

- What is a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs?
- In what ways does police visibility, particularly PCSO visibility, contribute to community engagement?

Summary of Findings

The Goffmanian analysis of the findings shows that a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs is created by the interactional accessibility of police officers and staff on patrol. The interactional accessibility of police officers and staff is structured by the boundedness, proximity and openness of the patrol spaces they occupy. The vehicle is a closed bounded space moving on the road at a distance from others that can restrict and disguise the physical accessibility of police officers. In contrast, the open unbounded space of walking on the street in close proximity to others can expose and amplify the physical accessibility of PCSOs. The variation in the interactional accessibility of vehicle and foot patrol spaces produces different types of police-public contact and conveys different messages about policing activity. Taken together, these differences can be used to highlight the compatibility of each patrol method to delivering a community engagement function. Vehicle patrol can create the potential conditions for minimal formal police-public contact and produce information about the activity of officers that is inconducive to establishing a visible presence to engage communities. In comparison, foot patrol can create the potential conditions for increased informal eye-to-eye and verbal police-public contact capable

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of facilitating a reciprocal expressive connection and developing relations conducive to establishing a visible presence to engage communities.

Examining the communicative gains of PCSO foot patrol in more detail to understand how they can contribute to the development of two-way dialogue with the public and a better understanding of communities, PCSOs utilising eye contact with the public, ranging from glancing to more prolonged visual attention, is identified as a fundamental and important interactional tool. At the outset, it is a means by which the auxiliaries can integrate into the public space to acknowledge and be acknowledged by others and potentially participate in creating a shared sense of calm and unity with those around them. At the same time, it can also serve a number of distinctive communicative functions. Firstly, a protracted gaze by a PCSO can facilitate orderliness by acting as a subtle negative sanction against improper behaviour and offering the opportunity for those involved to alter their conduct. Secondly, eye-to-eye contact between PCSOs and the public, whether that be in the course of the PCSOs walking around or responding to an incident, can signal information that reduces a sense of alarm, creates a perception of protection and safety and informs positive assessments of the auxiliaries and policing. Thirdly, these unplanned, reciprocal and tacit forms of eye contact can create an openness between PCSOs and the public that initiates unplanned face encounters.

Face engagements typically arise from greeting behaviours and can affirm and support the social relationship between PCSOs and the public and open the lines of communication for dialogue. Greetings involve to different degrees positive expressions of social recognition, such as smiles, and/or physical gestures, for instance waving or nodding, and are usually accompanied by verbal salutations. These welcoming exchanges can assist the PCSOs in communicating good intentions, social recognition and approval or provide an opportunity to intervene if something is wrong; all of which can result in them building relations in a civil way with unacquainted persons or maintaining relations in a considerate manner with acquainted persons. Nevertheless, greeting practices require some skilful manoeuvre by PCSOs, including applying caution when approaching others and managing the

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expectations that can arise from increased verbal contact, to avoid potentially alienating themselves or the persons involved or creating anticipations they are unable to fulfil.

The opportunity for and willingness of PCSOs to enter into talk can lead to unplanned face encounters that have the potential to allow them to demonstrate social closeness and relatedness; provide support and assistance; gather intelligence; or prevent and address low-level crime and disorder; all of which offer information about people and places that can build an understanding of areas. Underpinning all these impromptu contacts in most instances is a degree of social intimacy and sociability that can enable PCSOs to establish or maintain rapport with others through which they can form, accept or sustain personal relationships with them. It is this which is not only likely to stimulate dialogue between the PCSOs and public but create the relationships for ongoing dialogue. Important to the dialogic process is the influence PCSOs can exert over the structure of face engagements, particularly in regard to the speaking and leave-taking rights of participants. PCSOs are required to regulate their needs and expectations with those of the people involved to provide everyone with equal opportunity to contribute to the content of the talk and prevent the face engagement from losing focus or becoming unmanageable. An equally important and related aspect to face engagements are the farewell displays that PCSOs can perform which imply or encourage future contact. These closing gestures can allow people to feel considered by and familiar with the PCSOs and leave a positive impression of the relationship and interaction without creating burdensome expectations.

Two important elements of PCSO face engagements are accessibility and acquaintanceship. The accessibility of PCSOs in the public space facilitates their heightened readiness for and responsiveness to social contact with the public and contributes to them establishing a situational presence that can be experienced by all those around them both implicitly and explicitly. Persons in their presence can indirectly observe PCSOs' gestures and face encounters with others or directly enter into face engagements with them. In both of these occurrences, information is being

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communicated about the characterological traits of the PCSO role, the type of work they perform and/or the specific task they are undertaking which provides a basis for PCSOs to develop familiarity and relationships with people while simultaneously extending the reach of their work in communities. To manage their communicative accessibility in the public space, when PCSOs enter into face encounters they modify their positioning, spacing and conduct to make some effort to maintain its integrity, boundaries and privacy in the presence of others.

Acquaintanceship is identifiable in all relations between PCSOs and the public. From distinguishing their general status as uniformed policing representatives, accepting greetings through to knowing exclusive information, such as names, the public and PCSOs can always mutually identify each other. The regular presence of PCSOs in localities can develop the acquaintanceships they share with members of the public both informally and formally. Attending the same places and coming across the same people allows the PCSOs to informally build on their previous 'seeings' of said persons to learn more about them and the locality. Alternatively, PCSOs can develop acquaintanceships formally when they are introduced to people through a policing related matter, participation in a specific intervention or a third party. The progression of acquaintanceships brings about a social bondedness that increases the access between PCSOs and the public for face engagements with each other in passing or as part of unplanned visits or planned meetings in both public and private spaces. It is this aspect of PCSO acquaintanceships that can facilitate ongoing two-way dialogue and contribute to them providing support and reassurance; receiving updated information about an area's needs, risks and threats; and involving people in local policing.

The co-presence of PCSOs in the public space and their utilisation of a range of interactional devices create communicative opportunities, some of which do not require direct face-to-face contact, with all those around them. It can facilitate PCSOs developing a sense of belonging, trust, reassurance and familiarity with people they come across at the same time as enabling them to enter into face engagements, convey information directly and indirectly about their role and work, and foster

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lasting acquaintanceships with local people. All of these communicative contacts initiated or received by PCSOs are influential in developing a two-way dialogue with the public and a better understanding of localities. They allow the PCSOs to connect with people and places to provide a type of support, gain a type of insight and cultivate a type of relationship that would be hard to gauge and develop from the position of the vehicle. However, there were four identifiable features of the patrol practices observed that could be seen to hinder the interactional accessibility of police officers and staff in engaging communities.

Firstly, the extensive use of vehicle patrol significantly restricted the amount and type of communication between the police and public. Police officers predominantly used vehicles to conduct all their patrol work and PCSOs increasingly started to incorporate vehicles into their patrol practice, despite some recognition of the communicative obstacles it could create. The physical boundaries of a police vehicle can reduce or inhibit altogether direct and indirect forms of contact between the police and public. Furthermore, it is likely when the police make claims of others from inside the vehicle or others makes claims of the police from outside the vehicle that the contact between them will be limited to formal verbal exchanges. The positioning of police officers and staff in a moving vehicle can also suggest that they are occupied with a policing related task in hand and/or are unapproachable for everyday communication or a non-urgent matter. The lack of opportunity for informal types of interaction combined with the impression the vehicle can create around the work and availability of police officers and staff is likely to make it difficult for them to affect a presence capable of developing a dialogue with local people and an understanding of the locality.

Secondly, individual PCSO and supervisory decisions around the walking routes and locations for foot patrol sometimes led to the auxiliaries having little to no contact with the public and/or could potentially create the conditions for community disengagement. In terms of the discretion PCSOs exercised over their patrol, there were occasions where their decisions seemed informed by personal habits, preferences or conveniences as opposed to maximising the number of people they

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were actively encountering. A lack of PCSO proactivity in accessing areas of high footfall is likely to make it difficult for them to establish a consistent presence in localities in turn impacting upon their communicative reach. There is also the potential, as one PCSO recognised, that people will conclude police invisibility is down to police officers and staff not patrolling an area rather than consider it is related to them not having been present at the time the auxiliaries were in attendance. This type of assumption is likely to feed into negative public impressions of local policing.

There were also times when supervisors' decisions about PCSO patrol appeared to contribute to the auxiliaries becoming fixed in patrol routines where they were having little indirect or direct contact with the public. This was particularly evident in residential areas where it was assessed police visibility was necessary, usually related to the NPT having identified the need for or previously executed enforcement action against crime and disorder issues. However, these assessments did not appear to consider the communicative influence of PCSOs on foot, both in relation to ensuring the auxiliaries were interactionally accessible to residents and in terms of what their policing presence could represent. PCSOs patrolling an area at times and/or places where they do not come into contact with residents, particularly in those areas where police enforcement has occurred, reduces the opportunity for them to foster a supportive dialogue and acquaintanceships. In turn, this can create the impression that the PCSO presence is an extension of the previous enforcement action and impact upon residents' willingness to engage in any type of contact with them.

Thirdly, aspects of PCSOs' appearances and actions, such as using handheld devices and engaging in conversational encounters with each other, potentially signalled to persons in their presence that they were inaccessible for everyday social contact. While the handheld devices allowed PCSOs to keep up to date with their work on the go, they consumed a lot of their attention, especially as the auxiliaries still tended to allocate themselves time to use the office-based computers. The physical action of using handheld devices positioned PCSOs' bodies away from the public reducing the amount of eye contact they experienced with bystanders making it difficult for them

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to communicate their approachability for contact. Similarly, PCSOs patrolling in pairs increasingly engaged in conversations with each other which, again, could divert their attention away from people around them and discourage passing persons from affording them any consideration. On the surface, a conversation seems a minor distraction and does not physically impede the PCSOs from completing their patrol. However, it is this type of seemingly innocent byplay that can absorb more of their attention at the same time as creating an obligation in those around them to not intrude on the face engagement. Together these occurrences could disconnect the auxiliaries from everyday opportunities to communicate with the public during their patrol.

Finally, organisational influences on how PCSOs were deployed could make it hard for them to establish or maintain a consistent interactionally accessible presence in localities. The structure of the force region had changed resulting in NPTs occupying larger geographical areas with few, if any, satellite offices available for use. This adjustment was accompanied with an expectation that PCSOs would complete work tasks across the whole NPT area, and in some instances force area, to accommodate any shortfalls in staffing or respond to any operational demands. It created a situation where PCSOs were stretched thinly across the whole NPT area making it difficult for them to establish or maintain their dedication to their assigned beats and increased their reliance on vehicles to travel around and complete work tasks more efficiently. Consequently, it potentially hindered the auxiliaries from building dialogue and acquaintanceships to develop the knowledge required to have the most communicative impact, especially in regard to developing their awareness of the times and places where they can access high footfalls of people or different groups and services, and to foster a better understanding of places.

The identified situational, dispositional and organisational occurrences, factors and decisions highlight the subtle ways the interactional accessibility of police officers and staff on patrol can be reduced or obstructed altogether potentially making it difficult for the NPTs to develop community engagement. By drawing attention to potential interactional deficits in NPTs' patrol work, the research is seeking to show

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the value in police officers and staff developing their awareness and use of the identified interactional devices to make, where possible, small changes to how they conduct patrol and make sense of communities.

It is important to note that there were external influences, including weather conditions, the nature of residents' routines and the lack of shared public spaces, which were outside the control of police officers and staff and impacted upon the presence and absence of people at particular times of day in certain places. Similarly, there were times when members of the public acted improperly, particularly towards the PCSOs, either as part of acknowledging in some way their presence or from the outset of a face engagement. For the individual/s involved, the incivility signalled in different ways their alienation from contact with the PCSOs which made it difficult for the auxiliaries to cultivate a positive interaction. While such impropriety could create challenging conditions for the PCSOs to develop community engagement, it was not necessarily irreparable. Taking a sympathetic approach that incorporated an open-mindedness and willingness to interact with others could allow the PCSOs to look beyond the incivility and attempt to build some rapport to foster a positive and supportive exchange.

Bringing together the aforementioned ideas around the different interactional spaces of vehicle and foot patrol and the distinctive types of contact and messages that can be created from them, an interactional understanding of police visibility is constructed. Applying this perspective to community engagement work takes the conceptualisation of a visible police presence beyond police officers and staff simply being observable on patrol and emphasises all the communicative processes that need to take place for police visibility to contribute to community engagement.

Examining an Interactional Understanding of Police Visibility

The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted that, contrary to what is assumed in policing policy, all citizens will not willingly and capably engage with police officers

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and staff on patrol; that police officers and staff in a lot of instances will not routinely be instructed to, motivated to or have the necessary learning and skills to provide an engagement function on patrol; and that communities are not neatly packaged social units visible to patrolling police officers and staff. Taking each of these considerations about citizens, policing and communities and referring back to the literature, this section will show how an interactional understanding of police visibility complements, adds to and develops existing knowledge about community engagement in policing.

Citizen Engagement with Police on Patrol

An interactional understanding of police visibility supports existing research by showing that the type of patrol, the amount and nature of contact with the police on patrol and the approachability of patrolling police officers and staff is influential in developing engagement with citizens (Cowell and Kringen 2016; Kelling et al. 1974; Police Foundation, 1981; Vernon and Lasley, 1992). It reinforces the identified importance of the public seeing police officers and staff and having informal exchanges with them to develop familiarity, build police-public relationships and generate positive assessments of policing and community engagement (Cooper et al. 2006; Bradford, Jackson and Stanko, 2009; Paskell, 2007). This perspective also expands on these studies' findings by describing what citizens can experience when they see patrolling police officers and staff, either in vehicles or on foot; how this can facilitate or restrict contact between them; and how it can lead to community engagement as envisaged in the College of Policing (2018a) guidelines. Specifically, it outlines what it is about vehicle patrol that can make it less noticeable, the types of direct and indirect contact that can occur and what makes police officers and staff approachable. Accordingly, in terms of foot patrol, it offers an explanation for why in Foster and Jones' (2010) action research a PCSO only spoke to two people during their shift patrolling an estate; why in Crawford et al.'s (2005, p.57) study two conversing PCSOs on patrol can convey the message that 'we do not wish to be disturbed' and how they can, as the authors recommend, 'engage outwardly with

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their surroundings'; and how in Vernon and Lasley's (1992) study police officers actively engaging in informal positive contacts with citizens on patrol could build and enhance police-public partnerships. Equally, in relation to vehicle patrol, it explains why in Cowell and Kringen's (2016, p.19) study 'when officers got into the squad cars, it really provided a physical barrier and it eliminated a lot of that interaction'; how in Wood et al.'s (2014) research it was not possible for police officers on vehicle patrol to glean the knowledge of communities that foot patrol achieved; and why in Simpson's (2017) study police officers presented in a vehicle can be perceived as less approachable compared to those on foot.

By providing more theoretical detail about the individualities of citizen engagement with patrol, an interactional understanding of police visibility can be used to develop the SCP. It shows the nature of police symbolic communications and impression management on patrol in the public space, and how these communicative features of police visibility can become part of the interpretative processes of the public. In doing so, it can be seen to contribute to developing understanding around a number of understated aspects of the SCP. To begin with, it draws out the indirect forms of communication from police co-presence in the public space that can deliver signals about policing and safety. These are the 'organically derived' elements of police patrol that Innes (2014, p.137) describes when referencing the way in which a police presence can have an impact without police officers and staff intentionally doing anything. In doing so, it challenges critiques of the SCP, such as that outlined by Barker (2017), that dispute the extent to which police officers and staff by their 'mere presence' can have a communicative impact by highlighting how police officers and staff are always communicating something about themselves and the task that occupies them, which can be influential in a citizen's perception of their surroundings and policing.

Secondly, an interactional understanding of police visibility adds more insight into, what Innes (2014, p.134) terms, the 'doseage' effect of police visibility. Along with academic studies revealing that a heavy police presence can have a deleterious influence on public perception (Barker, 2014; Crawford et al. 2004; Foster and Jones,

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2010; Innes, 2014), this research shows how the frequency of police patrol can also be counterproductive, particularly in localities where there has been a prolonged police presence related to enforcement action and police patrol remains in place. It evidences the importance of explaining the purpose of police visibility to local residents and reviewing patrol routes regularly so that they are being conducted in a way that maximises positive communication with people.

Thirdly, an interactional understanding of police visibility describes the mechanics of how a police presence can communicate messages to a wider social audience; something Innes (2014) identifies as part of the inner workings of control signals but does not elaborate on. The perspective shows how citizens, either from directly or indirectly encountering patrolling police officers and staff, can use the information they have received or perceived about policing activity in further interactional situations with others. The potential spread of information, particularly when it occurs through indirect means, shows how police visibility can be 'vicariously experienced' by citizens (Henry, 2020, p.7). This type of experience, as Cowell and Kringen (2016) acknowledged in their research when they referred to an individual approaching foot patrol officers for help after observing them interacting with a group of people in a positive manner, is equally important to citizen perception and willingness to engage with the police.

Finally, this research brings together the signification aspect of the SCP and academic insights about the symbolism attached to the police uniform. An interactional understanding of police visibility draws on the cultural and symbolic power of the uniform and its significance in the first impressions generated of police officers and staff to provide the context for exploring the interactional spaces of patrol (de Camargo, 2016). It is the visible presence of the uniform in the first instance that can provide citizens with identificatory information that allows a clear distinction to be made between the police and public and conveys some implicit information about what the role represents; both of which can open up police officers and staff for contact. At the same time, this research can be seen to build on the role of the uniform in the image created of the police by exploring in more detail the other

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communicative aspects of their appearance and behaviour that can contribute to public impressions of and contact with visible police officers and staff.

An interactional understanding of police visibility not only builds on the finer distinctions made in the SCP, but it shows how the processes of signification can be applied to developing community engagement in policing. Nevertheless, an equally important part of sensemaking that the SCP identifies is that 'individual control signals interact and intermingle with range of other influences upon public experiences, perceptions and judgements about safety and security' (Innes, 2014, p.130). These influences, as the findings from the Community Policing programmes examined in Chapter 2 emphasised, can be negative in nature and related to distrust of the police, historic poor police-public relations and/or the experience of being placed at a disadvantage by policing, particularly for those citizens who reside in socially deprived and minority neighbourhoods (Herbert, 2005 and Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994). This is something that is equally significant to thinking about the process of signification in police visibility. In putting forward a perspective that describes types of direct and indirect police communication capable of conveying positive information about policing; promoting feelings of safety and protection; initiating positive face engagements; and building acquaintanceships, this research is not intending to overlook the complex relationship that exists between the police and public and how this can negatively influence citizen engagement with patrol.

The role, function and purpose of public policing is embedded in a history of political conflict and controversy and beset by structural inequalities that has contributed to issues of discrimination, corruption and abuse (Reiner, 2010). It is against this backdrop that policing scandals, injustices and dilemmas have contributed to a contemporary understanding of policing as a system of surveillance and social control, specifically in terms of monitoring and containing the poorest and most marginalised in society (O'Neill and Loftus, 2013; Reiner, 2010, p.5). This is most discernible in the policing of the public space where research shows the disproportionate and discriminate use of regulatory powers, such as the power to 'stop and search', against young people and non-white ethnicities which, in turn, has

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contributed to police visibility signifying danger and alarm for some sections of the population (Reiner, 2010, p.5; 2015; StopWatch, 2020). Therefore, from the outset, it is evident that the social control function that has become part of the construction of police patrol is at odds with the idea of it being a mechanism for engaging citizens. This is particularly problematic when thinking about how police officers and staff through their interactional presence on patrol can have a positive communicative impact. Goffman (2010, p.330) captures this sentiment when he surmises, 'there always have been groupings in society which feel considerable need for protection from the police, not merely protection by them.' At the same time, however, it could be argued that to disregard an interactional understanding of police visibility on these grounds reinforces a misleading narrative about policing that neglects what it symbolises and how it can be developed to be more democratic.

To only represent police patrol as a form of social control, surveillance and law enforcement plays into an imaginary characterisation of policing as essentially crime-fighting. This is an equally challenging and mythical conception of policing and the public police because it does not embody all of what policing actually entails and the reality of what the police do (Loader, 2016; Manning, 1997). Time and time again, it has been shown in research over the last forty years that a lot of what the police do is not crime related, and what is more meaningful to understanding policing is what the police symbolise (Loader, 2016). Police patrol is an area of work that is strongly symbolic in past and present conceptualisations of English policing. The iconic portrayal of PC George Dixon – the friendly local 'bobby on the beat' committed to the community and upholding order - is a symbolic representation of policing that is strongly linked to a sense of community and belonging (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; McLaughlin, 2007; Reiner, 2010). It speaks to a vision of cohesion, safety and order in communities that is associated with the post-war period (Reiner, 2010). In this way, police patrol is a practice that can be seen to emphasise the cultural symbolism of policing. However, often when the public demands more police visibility, it is uncritically accepted as a well-intentioned request that fulfils the needs of all the community and it becomes wrapped up in the policy assumptions identified and explored in Chapters 1 and 2 (Loader, 2006). Accordingly, the police are used as a

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symbol for shaping and validating a 'shared identification with a 'national' community' which is liable to cultivate a sense of rejection for many people from minority populations and risks making security pervasive to the extent that it creates insecurity (Loader, 2006, p.209 and p.212). While the symbolism the public attach to police patrol and the policy neglect of the cultural dimension to this practice can be damaging to how it is delivered, an interactional understanding in drawing attention to the 'cultural institution and performance' of a police presence offers a means to rethink how police patrol is constructed in the public and political discourse (Loader and Mulcahy, p.39; Loader, 2006).

In this research, the focus on individual police-citizen contacts and the police developing personalised connections with all those around them shows how police visibility can build a more inclusive narrative around patrol work. All police talk and action conveys information about 'society's conflicts, cleavages and hierarchies, about whose claims are legitimate within it, about whose status identity is to be affirmed or denied as part of it [...]; essentially, the police are 'a producer of significant messages about the kind of place that community is or aspires to be' (Loader, 2006, p.211). An interactional understanding of police visibility recognises the significance of police symbolism and illustrates how it can be channelled to start to contribute positively to securing a sense of security for all. By increasing police awareness of the cultural symbolism of policing and underlining the communicative properties and potential of police visibility in developing the cultural work of policing to engage individuals, an interactional understanding of police visibility can add to learning and development in Neighbourhood Policing by showing how police patrol can be made more inclusive, which is discussed in more detail in the final section.

Police Engagement with Citizens on Patrol

The communicative function of a police presence pinpointed in research, particularly in relation to PCSOs, and how it can be used to provide an engagement function is expanded upon by an interactional understanding of police visibility in three ways.

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Firstly, this perspective provides a more nuanced consideration of what it means for the police to be both visible and present on patrol, which are two aspects of patrol that do not automatically transpire from police officers and staff being observable to the public. Innes (2014) explains this point when he uses a participant's description of the police being 'like this invisible thing that fly around in cars' to show the negative perceptual impact visible police action can generate. This research both grasps and develops this particularity of police patrol to show that a visible police presence is not simply being seen but is created by police officers and staff being interactionally accessible in the public space. While on the surface these communicative distinctions might seem insignificant, it is these types of 'fairly subtle shifts in the public presentation of policing', as Innes (2014, p.133) identifies, that the public are very aware of and responsive to. Therefore, in expanding existing insights into police visibility at the micro-level, this research is providing a more rounded perspective of a consequential part of police patrol practice.

Secondly, an interactional understanding of police visibility offers insights into the ways in which police officers and staff can develop their use of informal forms of communication on their day-to-day patrol, which is a factor that is identified as an intrinsic element of police-community relations (Jones and Newburn, 2001). Studies show that informal communication, including people seeing police officers and having a personal contact with them on patrol, increases awareness of a local policing presence (Crawford et al. 2004; Vernon and Lasley, 1992); improves evaluations of the police service (Bennett, 1991; Pate et al. 1986; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997); and encourages people to report crime and become involved in crime prevention (Bennett, 1991; Trojanowicz, 1982). However, as Cosgrove and Ramshaw (2015, p.86) point out, contact on its own does not bring about engagement, 'it is the quality and nature of contact (or the behaviour and the conduct of individual officers during encounters) that shapes confidence and willingness to engage with the police.' Therefore, by specifying what police officers and staff can do in their everyday patrols to foster positive informal contact, this research is highlighting how the quality of police-public interaction can be improved in ways identified in the literature as impactful. Specifically, an interactional understanding of police visibility shows how

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police officers and staff can adopt a style of communication that facilitates people feeling more informed about policing activity; encourages police officers and staff to use social etiquette and be more receptive and responsive to the public; and develops familiarity with people. These types of communicative properties are identified in studies to be linked to higher opinions of police effectiveness and community engagement (Bradford, Jackson and Stanko, 2009; Brown and Wycoff, 1987; Pate et al. 1985); perceptions of procedural justice (Posick and Hatfield, 2017; Rosenbaum et al. 2017); and increased public confidence in policing (Merry et al. 2012; Rosenbaum et al. 2017). Furthermore, this focus on developing and improving police-public relationships is, as Pattavina, Bryne and Garcia (2006) found, more significant to citizen involvement in policing than perception of Community Policing.

Thirdly, an interactional understanding of police visibility adds to research that identifies the types of skills and behaviours police officers and staff should seek to develop and utilise in their community engagement work. In particular, it builds on studies that show the importance of PCSOs valuing and having communication, observation and intelligence gathering skills to develop their approachability, familiarity and local knowledge by showing what these skills can look like and how they can be performed in the practice context to achieve these outcomes (Cooper et al. 2006; Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Long, Robinson and Senior, 2006; O'Neill, 2014a; Paskell, 2007). By detailing the subtle aspects of interaction, this perspective provides a more rounded consideration of what having communication, observation and intelligence gathering skills can entail. Other studies draw attention to the significance of PCSOs being able to talk to a diverse range of people in a diverse range of situations, including approaching, negotiating and befriending 'harder to reach' persons, and using their knowledge to navigate challenging situations (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; O'Neill, 2014a, p.21). This research suggests that an integral part of these identified attributes is PCSOs having an awareness of and actively maximising their physical accessibility in the public space. It shows how police staff being mindful of their bodily gestures and positioning, utilising different forms of informal eye and verbal contact and structuring interactions in ways that include people can convey positive messages, build knowledge and foster supportive relations that can in turn

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involve those people in policing. Accordingly, an interactional understanding of police visibility adds more detail to some of the overarching descriptions used in research to describe the distinctive nature of the 'tools in the PCSO toolbox' (O'Neil, 2014a, p.21), such as their 'interactional street skills' (Long, Robinson and Senior, 2006, p.20) and general 'craft skills' (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015, p.86). At the same time, this research reaffirms the value of the PCSO role in community engagement work highlighted in other studies (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; O'Neill, 2014b).

Finally, an interactional understanding of police visibility builds on existing insights by bringing police officers into discussions around patrol and community engagement in the context of Neighbourhood Policing and showing how they can develop their engagement function. The examination of vehicle patrol in this research not only emphasises the implicit division between police officer and PCSO roles in community engagement work, as other studies have demonstrated (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015), but explains the way in which police officers in particular are potentially perpetuating a false sense of what their visible presence is achieving in relation to their community engagement remit. An interactional understanding of police visibility draws attention to the communicative properties of vehicle patrol and highlights how the appearance and actions of police officers travelling in vehicles can be perceived and experienced in ways that are unsupportive of developing citizen engagement. It explains why, as a police sergeant in Cowell and Kringen's (2016, p.20) research commented, 'people are more comfortable going up to an officer walking by them, shoulder to shoulder on the street, than they are to approach a cruiser.' This research goes further than providing an explanation and offers a means for police officers to develop this engagement deficit by showing the indirect and direct communicative devices they can utilise to gesture their connectedness to persons around them and open themselves up for contact.

Identifying Communities to Engage on Patrol

An interactional understanding of police visibility reinforces the arguments in existing research that demonstrate communities are not simple, static and homogenous organisational units that police officers and staff can readily see and access on place-based patrol (Bullock, 2014; Crawford, 1999; Fielding, 2009). To overcome the challenges police officers and staff face in trying to make sense of the diversity, fluidity and complexity of contemporary life, this research looks at how the police approach identifying and understanding communities through optimising their contact with the people and places already available to them on patrol. An interactional understanding of police visibility centres on police officers and staff gaining an awareness of the composition of communities and developing relationships with them through individual contacts with all citizens they come across in their neighbourhood areas. Consequently, instead of attempting to have prior knowledge of the social make-up and functioning of a place to identify types of communities to engage on patrol, this research sets out a bottom-up approach to community engagement. It focuses on police officers and staff using direct and indirect forms of communication with all citizens they encounter on patrol in the first instance to develop familiarity and build acquaintanceships over time. This can enable police officers and staff to understand better how those citizens identify with the people and places around them which in turn facilitates police officers and staff gaining knowledge about communities, as Fielding (2009) recommends, from those people in a position to know. Similar to what Wood et al. (2014, p.374) illustrated in their research, this perspective moves away from the police applying distinct labels to sections of the community and gives rise to their understanding of communities as 'a series of tiny urban segments with their distinct fabrics and textures'.

By concentrating on gaining knowledge from citizens in the street, this perspective can allow police officers and staff to see the communities around them in a way that the citizens belonging to those communities want to be seen. Moreover, the informality attached to everyday police-public contacts can facilitate police officers

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and staff engaging with persons who might not ordinarily be willing or able to participate in more formal police community engagement mechanisms, such as planned public meetings. Accordingly, an interactional understanding of police visibility reinforces the importance of informal engagement, as Jones and Newburn (2001) conclude, to better suit the needs of different community groups and increase the representativeness of the wider population in policing. The potential to increase the reach of policing offered by an interactional understanding of police visibility can assist the police in developing more inclusive engagement practice.

The shift in thinking about how police officers and staff identify communities to engage with on patrol shows how the police can foster some of the principles of a more democratic style of policing, similar to that described by Loader (2006), which works towards creating a sense of security and belonging for all individuals. By giving emphasis to police officers and staff using the communicative opportunities available to them on the street to have some form of contact with all citizens they come across, this perspective shows the potential for them to maximise their contact with individuals of different ages, genders and religions from different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, each with different lifestyles, experiences and interests. In this research, the diverse range of persons the PCSOs interacted with included those experiencing personal issues, such as homelessness and substance misuse; those dealing with crime and disorder problems; and those from traditionally harder to reach minority groups, which in the context of the NPTs studied, were young people, the elderly and travellers. This contrasts from the general propensity noted in some research for police officers and staff in Community Policing roles to spend less 'facetime' with citizens and target people who are economically advantaged, regard public policing positively and/or are in a relatively stable position in that they are not experiencing some type of personal crisis (Barnes and Eagle, 2007; Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Parks et al. 1999, p.484; Skogan, 1998). Instead, it supports the findings of studies which show police visibility when focused on developing personal contact with individuals can improve police relations with people from socially deprived minority neighbourhoods where crime, lack of

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community presence and distrust of the police exists (Trojanowicz and Banas, 1985; Skogan and Harnett, 1997; Vernon and Lasley, 1992).

The refocusing of community engagement on personal interactions to generate social inclusion and a sense of belonging, particularly among minority populations, also aligns with Bradford's (2014) work. Bradford (2014) argues that instead of seeking to build relations and engagement with different groups through community leaders, as is often the case, the police making use of the daily contact they have with the people represented by such leaders can be more influential in those persons' constructions of their social identity and assessments of their commitment to the wider community. The attention given to individual encounters between the police and public in an interactional understanding of police visibility, and its parallels with the literature around procedural justice, also shows how police officers and staff can be encouraged to be more reflective about their relations with all members of the community to consider what they are and are not doing to treat citizens fairly (Loader, 2006). In this way, an interactional understanding of police visibility has the potential to develop the essence of, what Barker (2017) conceptualises as, 'mediated conviviality'; a perspective that looks to reframe the way in which regulators, like the police, interact with people in the public space by promoting practices that are responsive to the context/situation and facilitate co-mingling and mediation between the diverse users of these areas.

Conclusion

Chapter 8

Concluding Police Visibility

Police visibility, characterised by the patrol presence of police officers and staff, and its contribution to community engagement, specifically providing ongoing two-way dialogue with the public and developing a better understanding of communities, was the main focus of this thesis. Drawing on the symbolic capital and cultural significance attached to uniformed patrol, its prominence in public expectations of policing and its assimilation into Community Policing programmes, including most recently Neighbourhood Policing, this research asked two questions:

- What is a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs?
- In what ways does police visibility, particularly PCSO visibility, contribute to community engagement?

A Goffmanian analysis of fieldnotes taken from observations and unstructured interviews with police officers and staff in two NPTs in one urban constabulary highlighted that a visible police presence in the day-to-day work of NPTs is created by the interactional accessibility of police officers and staff on patrol. It showed that the communicative opportunities arising from this interactional accessibility of police officers and staff, namely the different types of direct and indirect contacts they can experience with the public, is what can bring about community engagement on patrol. Using this frame of reference, the closed bounded space of vehicle patrol was identified as restricting the interactional accessibility of police officers and creating communicative barriers to developing citizen engagement. In contrast, the open unbounded space of foot patrol was identified as supporting the interactional accessibility of PCSOs and facilitating communicative opportunities to develop citizen engagement.

Bringing together the research insights into the different interactional spaces and communicative elements of vehicle and foot patrol, an interactional understanding

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of police visibility was developed. In addition to providing a way to make theoretical sense of how police visibility can contribute to community engagement and emphasising the value of ethnography in patrol research, this perspective was shown to offer practical benefits to policing to support police officers and staff in improving their understanding of citizen engagement with patrol, enhancing their patrol practices and developing their approach to making sense of communities. This chapter will firstly document the research journey that led to developing these understandings of police visibility and its contribution to community engagement by summarising the different phases of the study. It will be followed by a review of the theoretical, practical and methodological contribution of the thesis in the second section before making suggestions for future research in the final section.

Researching Police Visibility in Community Engagement

The initial impetus for studying police visibility in community engagement arose from identifying a limited understanding of this area of work in the practice context, a theoretical gap in the literature examining police presence and a renewed emphasis on patrol in Neighbourhood Policing. In my Masters research, I found that police officers and staff were familiar with the reassurance function the public attach to a police presence, but they struggled to articulate what it was about what they were doing on patrol that contributed to community engagement. Referring to academic work, specifically that concerned with the semiotic and symbolic qualities of visible policing, I discerned that there was a lack of theoretical understanding about the nature of police communications on patrol to both convey safety and security and deliver community engagement. In particular, the SCP while emphasising the communicative significance of police visibility was focused on how the public come to make sense of crime and disorder and lacked more detailed insight into what the police should be seen to be doing on patrol to convey reassurance. This made the perspective equally limiting for thinking about the nature of police symbolic communications in the delivery of community engagement.

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The relevance of making sense of this lack of insight into police visibility was emphasised by changes in policing. Amid financial cuts in local policing functions, increasing pressures on service delivery and the changing nature of crime, police visibility had reduced and the need for a PCSO role had been called into question. Against this backdrop, the College of Policing (2018a) devised *Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines* which set out police visibility as an essential element of engaging communities. The government also made a commitment to increase police funding to put more ‘bobbies on the beat’. These practice and academic discoveries combined with policy changes in policing highlighted the relevance of exploring police visibility in community engagement, specifically within the context of Neighbourhood Policing, and provided the primary motivation for the PhD research.

To provide context to the literature review, an examination of how police visibility as an aspect of community engagement had been presented in policy over recent decades was completed. Policing policy reforms were identified as having centred on visible, accessible and familiar styles of Community Policing that had formed part of policing responses to the Brixton Disorders, the ‘reassurance gap’ and embedding a citizen-focused policing philosophy, to reconnect with communities; reduce fear of crime and increase feelings of safety; better understand local crime and disorder problems important to communities; and involve citizens in policing. The policy portrayal of police visibility that took shape in Community Policing programmes, including the Reassurance Policing programme and Neighbourhood Policing programme, and creation of the PCSO role showed that it was structured around descriptions of the police delivering a service responsive to the community. This articulation of a ‘visible, locally responsive policing’ function provided by NPTs remained in policing priorities and was reflected in the most recent formulation of Neighbourhood Policing in the College of Policing (2018a) guidelines (Independent Police Commission, 2013, p.13-16). The policy commitment to police visibility and community engagement, and its repeated construction around the themes of service, responsiveness and community were interpreted as creating a number of assumptions, namely citizens will engage with police officers and staff on patrol; a

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police presence will provide an engagement function; and communities will be identifiable to police officers and staff on patrol.

Turning to the academic literature, research highlighted discrepancies between each of the identified policy assumptions and the practice reality of policing communities. Firstly, research into citizen participation in Community Policing and citizen perception of patrol showed that a multitude of interrelated factors can impact on the willingness and ability of citizens to engage with police officers and staff. Secondly, research highlighted how cultural and organisational influences on police officers and staff can impact the extent to which they are motivated, supported and equipped to deliver community engagement work. Thirdly, studies showed how romanticised imagery of a united geographic community policed by a place-based patrol presented in policy was incompatible with the diversity, fluidity and complexity of contemporary life. Taken together, this academic review of the policy assumptions emphasised that all citizens will not engage with police officers and staff on patrol; that all patrolling police officers and staff will not be instructed to, motivated to or have the required knowledge to provide an engagement function; and that communities are not standardised geographic units visible to police officers and staff on patrol.

The examination of the policy assumptions revealed gaps in existing academic knowledge about police visibility in community engagement. It showed a lack of qualitative exploration from a policing perspective into what citizens experience when they come into contact with police officers and staff on patrol; what police officers and staff do on patrol, especially in the context of Neighbourhood Policing, to engage citizens; and the way in which police officers and staff make sense of contemporary communities to engage on patrol. These identified gaps were used to formulate the research questions set out at the start of this chapter and an ethnographic research method was chosen to answer them. By deciding to observe police patrol as experienced by police officers and staff in NPTs, I was aware that I would be observing policing practice informed by the romanticised policy narrative that I had critiqued and found to be disconnected from the reality of policing and the

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nature of contemporary communities. I reconciled this conflict between my policy critique and the focus of my research through my emphasis on learning about police patrol at the micro-level. I was interested in what this policy looked like on the ground in the practice context and how it was operationalised by police officers and staff in their day-to-day community engagement work. Accordingly, I knew that by grounding my findings in the patrol realities of police officers and staff, I would be providing insights about how they made sense of and shaped the delivery of policy, flawed as it might be, in their everyday practice to provide an engagement function to present-day communities.

Ethnography was considered the most appropriate method because it offered a way of seeing and gaining insights at the micro-level to diversify the largely quantitative focused evidence-base informing patrol practice. At the same time, it was identified as a method that suited the study of policing as it provided a lens for seeing the nature, meaning and impact of police behaviours as they unfolded, and capturing the tacit subtleties of police settings, interactions and tasks. This way of making sense of police visibility in community engagement drew attention to interpretivism in the design and execution of the research. Specifically, a symbolic interactionist perspective was taken to emphasise the importance of communication (and interaction through communication) in the construction of social action.

Wildebay Police, where my Masters research had been conducted, was the pre-selected research site. While I had followed the University ethical procedures, I highlighted my awareness that ethical considerations extended beyond standard guidelines and, as an ethnographer, I faced ethical dilemmas at all stages of the research process from recruiting participants, building relationships to develop insights through to recording and presenting fieldwork data. To navigate these ethical challenges, I outlined how I incorporated considerations of honesty and fairness; anonymity and confidentiality; and integrity and carefulness in my research practice; and adopted a reflexive approach that took a realistic view of human relations and what was required of participants to be involved in the fieldwork. The fieldwork was carried out between July 2017 and February 2018 and comprised

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twenty observations of police officers and staff for 15 'day' shifts (0800 until 1600 or 1800) and 5 'late' shifts (1400 or 1500 until 2200 or 0000) across two NPTs. It involved accompanying participants in the course of their routine work across private and public spaces, including police stations, police vehicles and private residences, to observe first-hand their patrol presence and talk to them about their perspectives and experiences of patrol and delivering community engagement. Reviewing my experience and management of the fieldwork, gaining access to participants, thinking about my presentation and considering how I engaged with participants to maintain access and develop relationships were all identified as important aspects that I had to continually negotiate. In particular, my identity, positionality and research persona were highlighted as important influences on how I experienced and how I was experienced by others in the field. It was illustrated how personal reflection formed a valuable research practice to work through my thoughts and feelings and separate my 'researcher self' from my 'private self'.

The analytical process was described as starting from the point of producing electronic fieldnotes after each observation and involving a dialogue between the data and ideas to find concepts to understand what I was seeing. It was at this point that the symbolic interactionist perspective adopted at the start of the research was developed through the identification of Erving Goffman's work as a useful theoretical framework. Goffman's concepts on face-to-face interaction were pinpointed as capturing the expressive, communicative, perceptual and physical elements of social interaction. These concepts were shown to offer a way to make sense of the ideas around 'presence' and 'interactional spaces' that had been isolated as significant aspects of patrol in early observations and were developed into a coding structure that was used to thematically analyse the fieldnotes. By showing this process of theoretical development from a symbolic interactionist perspective in the earlier phases of the research through to a Goffmanian analysis in the latter stages, the thesis also acts as a narrative of my conceptual thinking.

The analysis illustrated the interactional features of police officers in vehicles and contrasted them with that of PCSOs on foot. The interactional space of vehicle patrol

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was shown to limit the amount and type of interaction police officers experience with the public and convey the message that they are unavailable for informal contact. In comparison, the interactional space of foot patrol was shown to increase the opportunity for different types of informal eye-eye contact and verbal exchanges between PCSOs and the public capable of facilitating orderliness, signalling positive information about safety, security and policing and initiating unplanned face engagements. Examining the unplanned face encounters in more detail revealed that welcoming exchanges could communicate good intentions, social recognition and provide an opportunity for assistance; and more focused conversations could demonstrate social closeness and relatedness, provide support and assistance, gather intelligence, or prevent and address low-level crime and disorder. All of these instances were described as offering PCSOs a way to establish, maintain and develop dialogue with acquainted and unacquainted persons, and build an understanding of people and places in their localities. A number of features were identified as important to PCSO management of the dialogic process, including applying caution and managing expectations when entering into talk; regulating the speaking and leave-taking rights of all those engaged in talk; and performing farewell displays to imply or encourage future contact.

Accessibility and acquaintanceships were isolated as two important elements of PCSO face engagements. The accessibility of PCSOs in the public space was shown to facilitate their increased readiness for and receptiveness to contact with the public and contribute to them establishing a situational presence that could be experienced by all those around them both implicitly and explicitly. From observation of PCSOs' gestures and face encounters with others to experiencing the PCSOs in a face engagement, it was illustrated that information could be conveyed directly and indirectly about the characterological traits of the PCSO role, the type of work they complete and the specific task they are undertaking to show the potential reach of their work and how it could develop familiarity and relations with people. At the same time, it was established that the PCSOs modify their positioning, spacing and conduct when engaged in face encounters to maintain its integrity, boundaries and privacy. PCSOs were identified as developing acquaintanceships with all those they

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came in to contact with. The development of these acquaintanceships beyond PCSOs being recognised as uniformed policing representatives to being personally identifiable could create a social bondedness between them and the persons involved capable of increasing access between them for future face engagements. It was this aspect of acquaintanceships that was shown to facilitate ongoing two-way dialogue and contribute to PCSOs providing support and reassurance, receiving updated information about people and places and involving people in policing.

Overall, the interactional accessibility of PCSOs on foot patrol was identified as creating the communicative opportunities, that is direct and indirect forms of contact with the public, that could allow them to develop social intimacy, sociability and familiarity with all persons they encountered, convey information about their role and work, and establish lasting acquaintanceships. It was these communicative contacts that were pinpointed as influential in fulfilling a community engagement function, specifically developing two-way dialogue with people and a better understanding of communities. At the same time, it was recognised that positioning PCSOs on foot patrol did not automatically lead to them establishing a visible presence that could engage people. Impropriety in face engagements and different types of PCSO inaccessibility brought about by low footfall of people, missed interactional opportunities and organisational changes were highlighted to consider how they had impaired PCSO visibility and in turn weakened their community engagement function. The way some of these situational, dispositional and organisational occurrences, factors and decisions could be resolved was also presented.

An interactional understanding of police visibility was set out as a way to bring together the ideas around the interactional spaces of patrol and the types of indirect and direct communicative contact that can be created from them that were illustrated in the findings and analysis. Taking this perspective and returning to the considerations about citizens, policing and communities highlighted in the literature review, the way in which it complemented, developed or added to existing knowledge about police patrol and community engagement in policing was explored.

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Firstly, in relation to citizen engagement with police on patrol, the perspective was considered to support research findings that showed the type of patrol, the amount and nature of contact with the police on patrol and the approachability of patrolling police officers and staff as influential in engaging citizens. It was seen as offering an explanation for why the actions of police officers and staff on foot patrol or the presence of the vehicle in some studies had resulted in assessments of citizen engagement or disengagement. In addition, it was identified as expanding on research by illustrating what citizens can experience when they see and come into contact with police officers and staff on vehicle or foot patrol, and how it can lead to two-way dialogue and a better understanding of people and places.

Secondly, on the subject of police engagement with citizens on patrol, an interactional understanding of police visibility was seen as providing additional insights around how the police can foster positive informal contact in their everyday patrols in a way that has been shown to influence public confidence and views of policing and community engagement. Similarly, it was identified as illustrating the craft of patrol work, that is the skills and behaviours that support police officers and staff developing a familiar, accessible and approachable style of policing in the public space, to contribute to learning and development in this area of work. Also, it was highlighted how an interactional understanding of police visibility included police officers in considerations of police patrol to reinforce and develop their role in community engagement.

Finally, in relation to identifying communities on patrol, an interactional understanding of police visibility was identified as embodying a bottom-up approach to community engagement where police officers and staff start with establishing contact with persons they come across, understand the communities they identify with and access them through the acquaintanceships they develop with those persons. This was shown to contrast with what is a common top-down approach in policing where police officers and staff use prior knowledge of the social make-up of an area to identify communities and find representatives of those communities to gain access to them. By focusing on informal contacts with individuals in the first

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instance, an interactional understanding of police visibility was pinpointed as a way to not only better meet the needs of more people, especially those who ordinarily might not be willing or able to participate in formal Community Policing interventions, but also maximise contact with a diverse range of people. However, in characterising an interactional understanding of police visibility as a bottom-up approach, this research was not dismissing the necessity and importance of involving a range of professionals and organisations in policing to develop engagement tools and strategies, and gain access to citizens and communities, including those that do not occupy the public space. Indeed, multi-agency working, and partnership initiatives formed part of the community engagement work in the NPTs observed. Instead, an interactional understanding of police visibility was presented as offering one way to make patrol, in particular, more inclusive and showing a potential starting point for developing a more democratic style of policing that is discussed in existing research.

Contributions to Knowledge

Taking the aforementioned overview into consideration, this research can be identified as making some key theoretical, practical and methodological contributions to knowledge.

Theoretical

The focus in this research on the mechanics of police visibility at the micro-level provides a theoretical understanding of what it is about what police officers and staff are or are not doing on patrol that can be influential in citizen engagement. This focus on the individualities of citizen engagement with patrol develops a number of aspects of the SCP. It offers a more nuanced understanding of what it means for the police to be both visible and present when they are conducting patrol, pinpoints the indirect forms of communication from police co-presence in the public space and specifies how they can feed into citizen perceptions, assessments and understandings of

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policing and safety. Building on this, it shows how direct or indirect contact with police officers and staff can be communicated to a wider social audience, and how it can influence citizen interpretation and willingness to engage with the police. This perspective also offers a way to explain why in certain instances the frequency of police patrol can be counterproductive to establishing a presence to engage with citizens. In emphasising the communicative features of a police presence, an interactional understanding of police visibility can show how the symbolism of the police uniform forms part of the processes of signification at the same time as pointing out the other aspects of appearance and behaviour that can feed into public impressions of and contact with police officers and staff.

Bringing together the highlighted points, an interactional understanding of police visibility can set out in more depth the nature of police symbolic communications and impression management on patrol, how they can play a part in citizen interpretations and lead to engagement with police officers and staff. At the same time, however, it is important to recognise that a police presence does not symbolise safety and protection to all persons, particularly young people and those from non-white ethnic groups, which can impact upon the extent to which all citizens will perceive patrol positively and as a mechanism for engagement with the police. With this in mind, this perspective offers a way to start to rethink how police visibility is constructed in the public and political discourse through its emphasis on police officers and staff having an awareness of their symbolic communications and developing personalised connections with all those around them.

Practical

An interactional understanding of police visibility can inform and develop patrol practice in community engagement. The research emphasised in a number of ways in which police officers and staff and police managers can make changes to increase the interactional accessibility of patrol and overcome communicative obstacles. From consistently making an effort to enter spaces with footfalls of people;

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proactively exchanging eye contact and greetings with the passing public; exiting the vehicle and spending some time on foot in public spaces; through to advertising their availability for talk, especially at times when they may appear otherwise engaged, many straightforward ways police officers and staff can alter their patrol practice were presented. It was also identified that there is a role for managers to regularly review the patrol routines of their team to ensure the interactional presence of police officers and staff in different localities is maximising positive contact with the public to facilitate community engagement. Relatedly, managerial oversight over the amount of time police officers and staff, particularly PCSOs, are allocated to their dedicated beats was highlighted as important to ensure they are able to consistently devote a certain amount of their time to patrol. Together these suggested changes highlight how police officers and staff can realise and tailor their communicative position on patrol in the public space to reduce the likelihood of static and inefficient patrol routines and/or delivering a police presence that conveys messages capable of bringing about community disengagement.

On the surface, identifying the communicative properties of foot and vehicle patrol may appear a futile undertaking. It might seem obvious to some that being positioned on foot actively participating in eye-to-eye contact, engaging in greeting behaviours with a willingness to initiate and receive unplanned face engagements, and building acquaintanceships in localities is not only influential in developing community engagement, but more constructive than surveying an area from a moving vehicle. However, these subtleties of communication and their role in the daily routines of people moving around the public space are taken for granted aspects of interaction, particularly as this research indicated, in the considerations of police officers and staff on patrol. The utility of this perspective to Neighbourhood Policing and the benefits it can bring to learning and development in patrol and community engagement work can be summarised in the following points:

- It draws attention to the understated ways police officers and staff on foot patrol can maximise their presence, most of which involve forms of demonstrating civility and developing expressive connections with those

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around them, that add to or complement the existing work skills and experiences of police officers and staff.

- The organisational costs, in terms of time and resources, involved in using the interactional devices identified to develop connections and relations with people are minimal. They take place in the course of the daily foot patrol practices of police officers and staff in line with their workload demands and the NPTs' priorities and can be structured in such a way that they do not create additional work or burdensome expectations that they are unable to satisfy.
- It involves forms of interaction that require little effort or personal investment from members of the public as it occurs informally within their day-to-day routines with no specific obligations. Accordingly, the fortuitous low-cost circumstances can increase the likelihood and potential frequency of a diverse range of people participating in contact with police officers and staff. More contacts with a variety of people over time increases the ability of the police to foster a dialogue with different groups and enhance their knowledge of communities.
- It emphasises how a lot of the information communicated to the public about a police presence is indirect and can contribute to public assessments of how individual police officers and staff members perceive themselves and others, and the general nature of local policing. The subsequent impressions formed can influence the extent to which the public are willing to engage with the police, either at that moment in time or at a later date. Accordingly, it highlights the importance of police officers and staff being aware that they are always communicating something about themselves and the work they are doing to those around them.

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- The scope of influence police officers and staff can possess when they employ indirect and direct forms of communication in their foot patrol practice can be wide-ranging as it offers the potential for them to communicate to people both visible and not visible to them. By the same token, it highlights the potential lack of reach police officers and staff can have when they do not actively engage in direct and indirect forms of communication with those around them during patrol.
- It provides insights that are applicable to police officers as well as police staff. The overwhelming focus is on PCSOs because they do the majority, and in the case of this research, all of the foot patrol in NPTs. However, some of the informal direct and indirect communication identified can be conducted from inside the vehicle or across the boundary of the vehicle and all of it is available to police officers when they alight the vehicle and are passing through the public space. Moreover, it encourages police officers to spend some of their time during vehicle patrol on foot to maximise their opportunity to have contact with the public and develop their community engagement facility.
- It offers a way of redefining community in policing by focusing on police officers and staff having contact with individuals. This in turn can change how NPTs make sense of communities and how they go about gaining access to them.

Rooted in the patrol realities of police officers and staff and showing what is possible within the confines of the cultural and organisational context, this perspective can be used as a learning resource to develop the communicative work of patrol while elevating the status of this practice. By showing what the interactional devices available to police officers and staff on patrol are and how they can be maximised to achieve community engagement, it can increase the acceptance, understanding and willingness to actively support this type of work at all levels of policing. In turn, this can increase the importance and value attached to foot patrol, community engagement and the PCSO role in the organisational structures and occupational

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orientations of police officers and staff. This is particularly important in the current climate of reduced resources where there is a risk that vehicle patrol will overshadow the utility of foot patrol, and even the need for the PCSO role. Overall, an interactional understanding of police visibility can provide the foundation for developing clarity, capacity and culture in citizen and community engagement which, as Simmonds (2015, p.4) identifies, are the elements required to bring about positive change in police engagement practice.

Methodological

Using an ethnographic lens and a Goffmanian theoretical framework, this research has: developed an interactional understanding of police visibility which provides a way to make sense of the communicative function of patrol identified in the literature; consolidated existing insights around the engagement skills and practices of police officers and staff on patrol; and filled the gap in knowledge about what police officers and staff do on patrol to engage citizens. In doing so, this research supports academic commentary that identifies the importance of exploring the 'craft of policing' qualitatively from the perspective of police officers and staff to provide a fuller understanding of patrol work and reinforces the value of Goffman's work to policing studies. It also strengthens existing policing research by emphasising the particular value of using Goffman's concepts on face-to-face interaction in the analysis of policing practice to provide a more nuanced understanding of police communication. The ongoing importance of physical forms of communication in all areas of policing shows how this type of Goffmanian analysis is both relevant and meaningful to developing practice insights. While this research confirms the suitability of ethnography and Goffman's work on face-to-face interaction to the study of police officers and staff on patrol, it is not without its limitations, especially in thinking about the wider applicability of the research findings.

An interactional understanding of police visibility was constructed from one ethnographic study of two NPTs in one urban police force during a specific time

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period. It was pointed out that there were no minority ethnic participants involved in the research which reflected the ethnic composition of the wider force and neighbourhood areas studied. Taken together, the research does not consider the potential differences in policing environments, such as rural contexts; the possible variations in organisational structures and priorities across police forces and policing teams in the UK; and the range of racial and ethnic differences in both the staff population and the wider population, and their potential to influence police-public contact and relationships in different ways. Additionally, the study did not set out to explore the communicative properties of patrol and consequently there is no evidence that police officers and staff on patrol were being interpreted and experienced by citizens in the ways illustrated in an interactional understanding of police visibility, and if it was improving community engagement in those neighbourhoods. These constraints highlight the aspects of the study which would benefit from further exploration.

Suggestions for Future Research

Taking into consideration the identified limitations, future research could specifically focus on the application of an interactional understanding of patrol in Neighbourhood Policing in different policing environments, employed by a number of different NPTs across a range of police forces in the UK and involving populations with a variety of demographics. It would be useful to understand how this perspective is applied by police officers and staff, how it is interpreted by the public and the type and nature of the impact it has on developing citizen and community engagement.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Participant Information and Consent Forms

To protect the anonymity of the police force studied in the presented copies of the participant information and consent forms, the name of the constabulary is replaced with the pseudonym 'Wildebay' and the names of the specific points of contact in the force are deleted (only their rank is referenced). Phone numbers and email addresses have also been removed.

Participant Information Form – Community Engagement in Policing

You are being invited to participate in a research study led by the University of Liverpool. Before you decide whether to participate, please ensure that you understand the purpose of the research and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and feel free to request any further information or clarification. Please also take time to discuss it with your fellow officers. You do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to. Thank you for reading this.

Research Purpose: The practice of 'community engagement' in policing is wide-ranging and a lack of understanding exists around how police officers and staff structure the approach in their work. The project is seeking to explore the ways police officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and other relevant police staff understand and deliver 'community engagement' in their day-to-day work. I am interested in the routine practices and targeted interventions adopted by police officers and staff with the many different types of communities they interact with. I wish to observe police officers and staff in the course of their duties and, at a later date, interview them to gain insight into their experiences of 'community engagement' and to reflect on their practice.

Appendix

Research Participants: I wish to observe police officers, PCSOs and other relevant police staff in Neighbourhood Policing Teams across *Wildebay* Police.

Do I have to take part? Participation is voluntary. Should you choose not to be observed or to be interviewed, this will not be recorded in the research. Should you agree to participate, you can, at a later stage, withdraw your consent during the observations or interviews. Any data gathered will be anonymised and you can request destruction of that data up to 3 months after an observation or interview.

What does participation involve? I will observe you during the course of your duties on full day and late shifts and make written notes of the observations at the time and immediately after the end of each observation. Where possible and appropriate, I wish to discuss how you are going about your work during the course of the observations. At a later stage, I will interview you to further discuss and understand your views and experiences in relation to working with the community. These interviews will be recorded, with your consent, or handwritten notes will be taken. Interviews will last for about one hour and will take place in working hours with the consent of your supervisory officers. However, they will not be informed about the content of observations or the discussion in interviews. The data will be retained for the purposes of this study.

How will you benefit from participation? Participation will provide the opportunity to think about and reflect on the ways in which you work with the public during the course of your duties. The opportunity to reflect and discuss the ways in which you operate will be a valuable one. At the same time, it will be an opportunity to engage with and influence aspects of training and development available to officers in the force. In this context, it is also an opportunity to speak directly to senior officers about your role and the way you operate in an anonymised and 'safe' manner.

Confidentiality: Your name will not be recorded alongside notes of observations or records of interviews. I will record your rank and role, but not your station/command/team and no other identifying information. I will record the date

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of the interview and the observations to which it is connected. All data will be stored securely on University servers and will be destroyed five years after the completion of this study. Where material you provide is used in subsequent reports or publications, a pseudonym will be used. Your rank will not be referred to in a way that might compromise your anonymity. Should you wish, you may have a copy of the transcript of your interview. I will not report individual actions unless they constitute a serious criminal offence.

How will the results be used? The research has been commissioned by *Wildebay* Police and approved by the Chief Officers' Group, the Police Federation and other relevant staff associations. I will report to Steering Groups chaired by the *Chief Inspector of Wildebay* Police. Any reports will inform discussions about the way police officers and staff work with communities and potential training or development in this area. Data will also be used in academic publications.

Further information and contact: Should you have any queries or require further information, please contact Lisa Weston or the Principal Investigator, Dr Mike Rowe.

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to contact Lisa Weston or the Principal Investigator, Dr Mike Rowe. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the University of Liverpool's Research Governance Officer. When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Appendix

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Community Engagement in Policing

Researcher: Lisa Weston, University of Liverpool

I confirm that I have read and have understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above research project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary, and it has been explained to me that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected.	
I understand that a written record will be kept of the interview. I will be asked for permission to record the interview by Dictaphone, but I am aware I do not have to agree.	
I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to any information I provide, and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish up to 3 months after an observation or interview.	
I agree to take part in the above study.	

.....
Participant Name	Date	Signature
.....
Name of Person Taking Consent	Date	Signature
.....
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

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